



2007

DO YOU RECALL WHEN WE
USED TO JUMP RIGHT ON
THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT
SO WE WOULDN'T BE
ON EARTH
AT THE
MOMENT
THE NEW
YEAR
RANG
IN?



WE HAD SOME ODD LITTLE
TRADITIONS IN THOSE DAYS.
...NOTHING I'D EVER ADMIT
TO NOW.

WE
ALL
GROW
UP
SOME-
TIME.



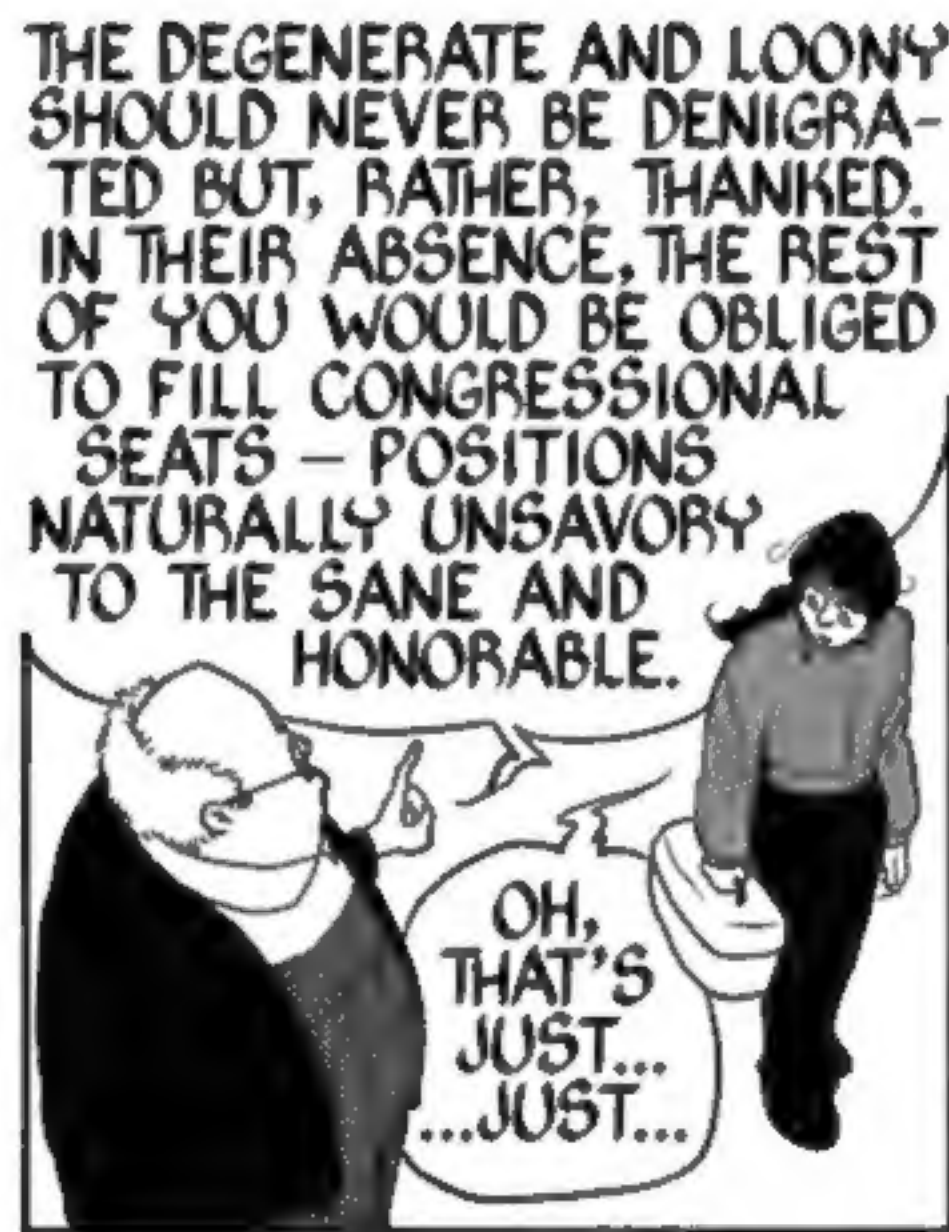
HAPPY
NEW
YEAR,
HONEY.

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HAPPY
NEW
YEAR,
MOM.

Brooke







WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF
NEW YORK CITY, IN THE
DEAD OF WINTER...

...AND I JUST
SAW A FAIRY
RIDING ASTRIDE
A MONARCH
BUTTERFLY.

WHAT
SHOULD
I DO?

DON'T
MAKE EYE
CONTACT.



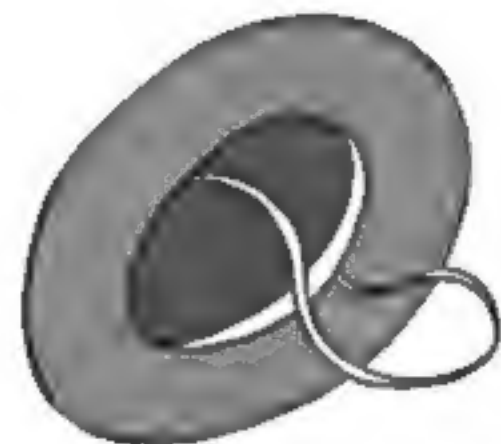
MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

FREEDOM:
NOUN, ARCHAIC;
THE ORIGINAL
DEFINITION OF WHICH
IS SUBJECT TO
DISPUTE.



Brooks

IN MODERN USAGE, ITS
MEANING CAN BE DERIVED
ONLY THROUGH A HEAD COUNT:
WHEN LIVES ARE PUT
ON THE LINE IN DISTANT
LANDS FOR AN AMBIGUOUS
CAUSE, THE STANDARD
EXPLANATION IS THAT
THEY ARE PROTECTING
FREEDOM. THE GREATER
THE AMBIGUITY, THE
GREATER THE NUMBER OF
LIVES – UNTIL FREEDOM
CAN BE DEFINED ONLY
THROUGH CONSCRIPTION.



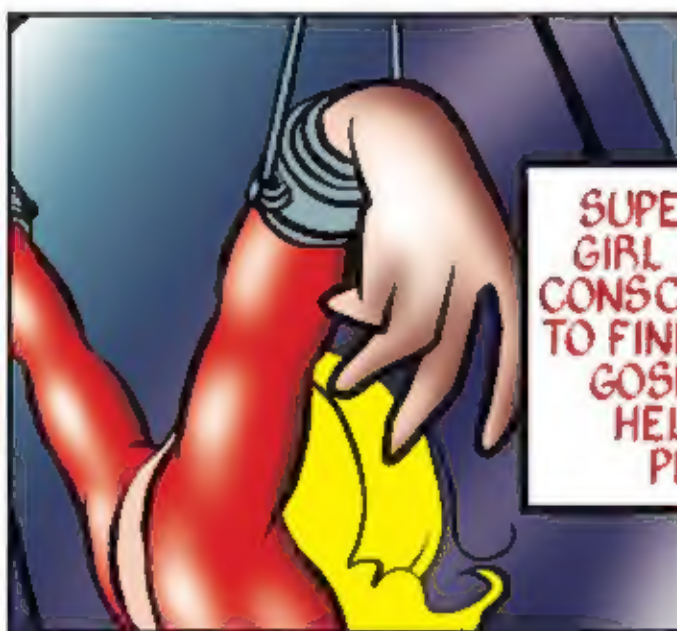
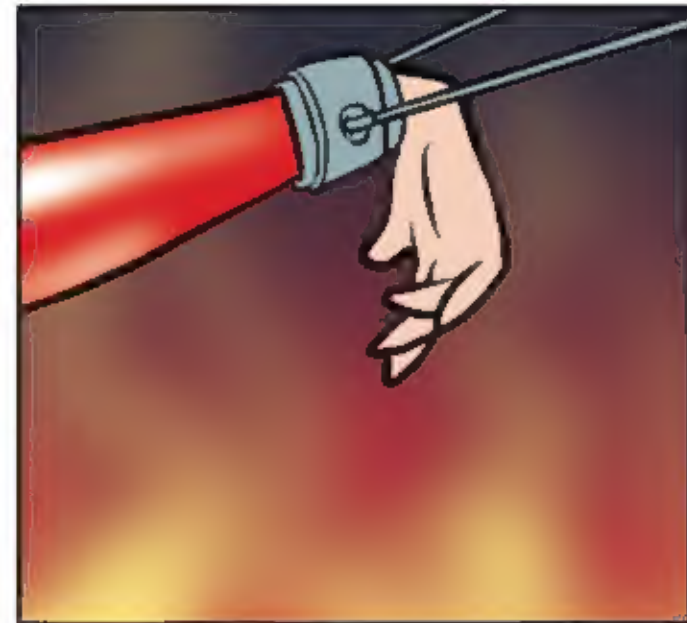
WHO WOULD YOU
VOTE FOR?

I CAN'T DECIDE UNTIL
THE FIELD
NARROWS.

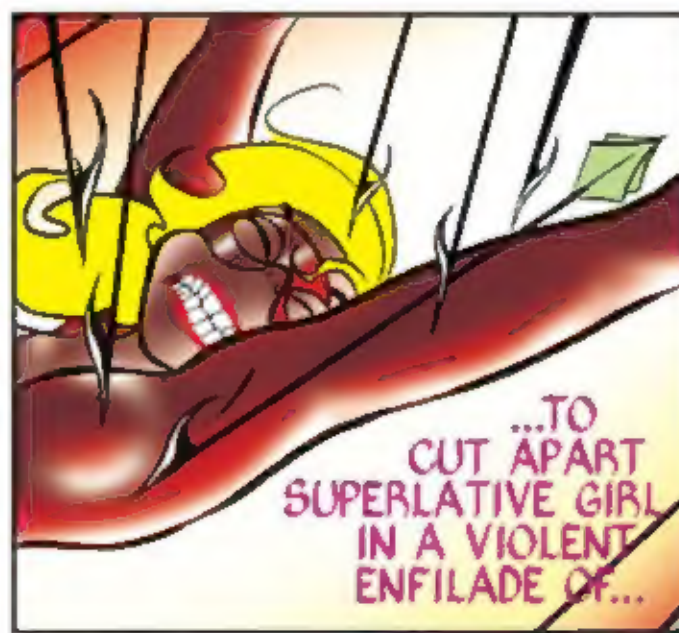
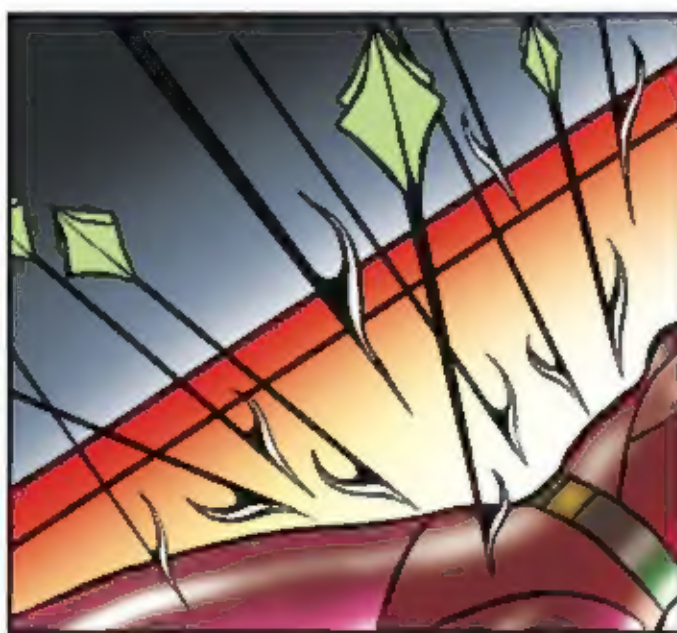
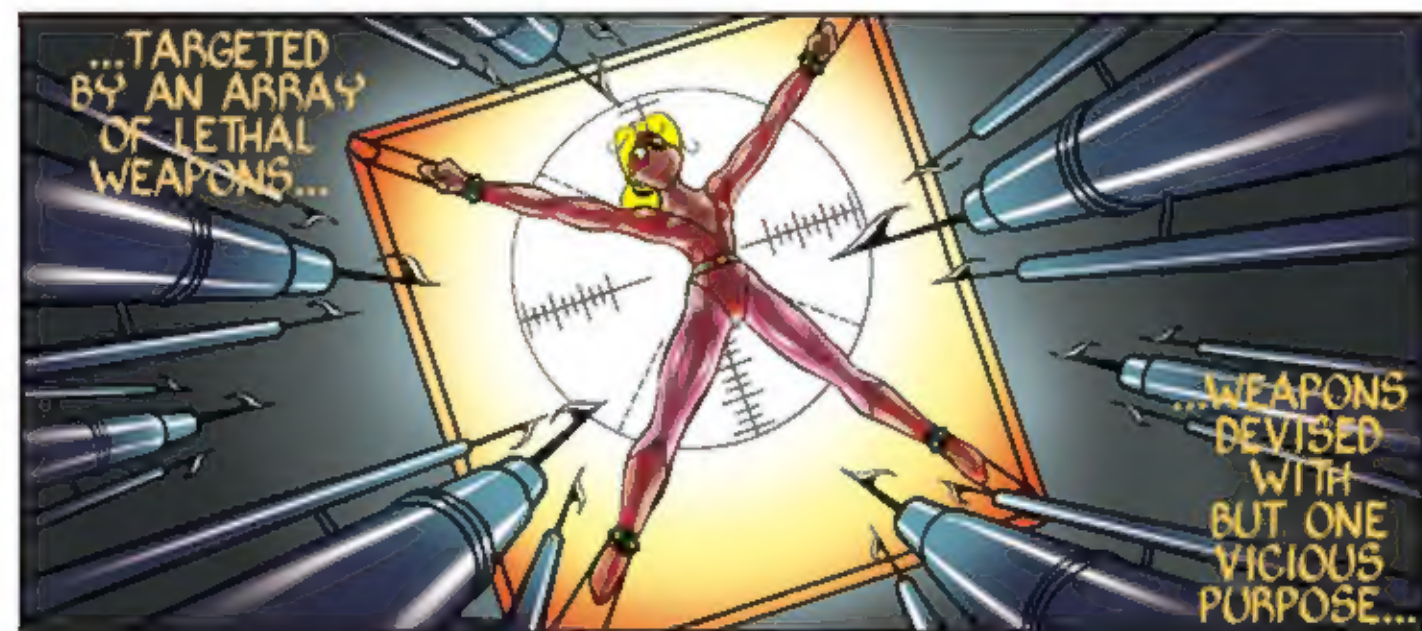
I THINK I'LL VOTE FOR THE
FIRST ONE SOLANGE WOULD
NOT INSTINCTIVELY
BURY.

THAT
NARROWS
THE FIELD.

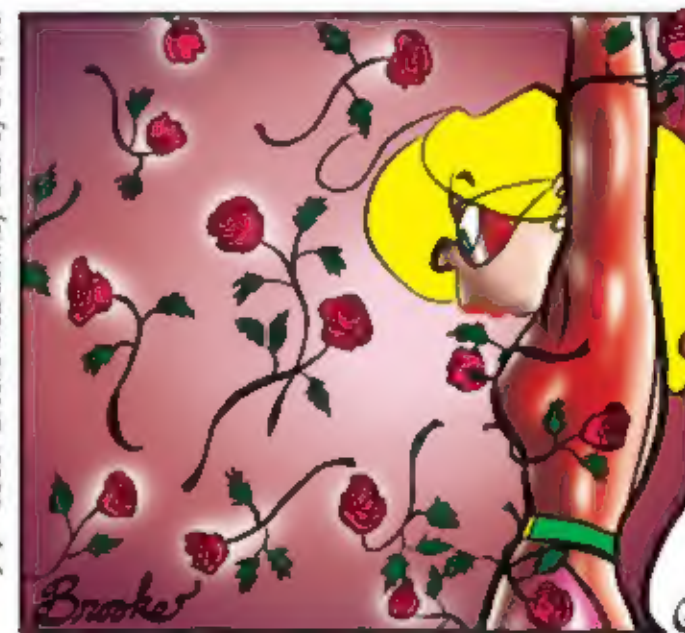
Brooke



SUPERLATIVE
GIRL REGAINS
CONSCIOUSNESS
TO FIND HERSELF
GOSFORTH'S
HELPLESS
PREY...



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DR. BURBER, AS A TRUSTEE OF THE UNIVERSITY, I WAS WONDERING IF I MIGHT PULL A LITTLE STRING AND ASK YOU TO MEET MY SON. HE'S SET ON BEING PRE-MED, AND HE'LL BE TAKING A COURSE FROM YOU THIS TERM.



AND YOU'D LIKE ME TO PROMISE THAT MY PART IN HIS APPROACH TO MEDICAL SCHOOL WILL BE A COAST. ...AM I CORRECT?



I THINK WE SEE EYE TO EYE.

THAT'S FINE...IF YOU PROMISE TO BE THE FIRST PERSON ON WHOSE PROSTATE HE PERFORMS SURGERY...AND I GET TO WATCH.



HAVE WE A PACT?

UM...
...NEVER MIND.

I ENJOYED SEEING EYE TO EYE WITH YOU.



DR. BURBER, THEY SAY YOU
SPLIT YOUR TIME BETWEEN
A FARM IN THE COUNTRY AND
YOUR JOB HERE. DOES THAT
COMPROMISE THE QUALITY
OF YOUR TEACHING?



NOT IN THE LEAST. I FIND
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE
SPENDING A DAY
IN THE COMPANY OF
BIG, DUMB,
FERTILIZER-
SPEWING
BEASTS
TO PROMOTE
A HEALTHY,
RIGOROUS
PERSPECTIVE
ON WHAT
I DO.



AND
THEN
I GO BACK
TO THE
FARM.



FLYING OUT OF AMBUSH,
PANTHER WOMAN
POUNCES ON THE
HAPLESS HUNTER, HER
EYES AFLAME WITH
SAVAGE DESIRE.



AS MUCH AS I ENJOY THESE
DIVERTISSEMENTS WHEN THE
FACULTY LOUNGE IS EMPTY...
...COULD YOU QUIT SEIZING
THE NUMBER TWO PENCILS
IN YOUR
TEETH?

THEY ALWAYS SNAP
IN HALF...AND
PEOPLE ARE
BEGINNING
TO TALK.



PANTHER WOMAN
WATCHES, INTENT,
AS A GROUP OF
WHITE HUNTERS
PASS BENEATH
HER BOWER IN
THE JUNGLE
CANOPY.
THE ONLY
PREDATOR
WHOSE CUNNING
THEY TRULY
FEAR, SHE
POISES HERSELF
TO PICK OFF THE
STRAGGLER
IN THEIR PARTY.



I'M SUPPOSED
TO SPEAK AT
THE TRUSTEES'
LUNCHEON.

NOT UNTIL
I'VE HAD
MY WAY
WITH YOU.

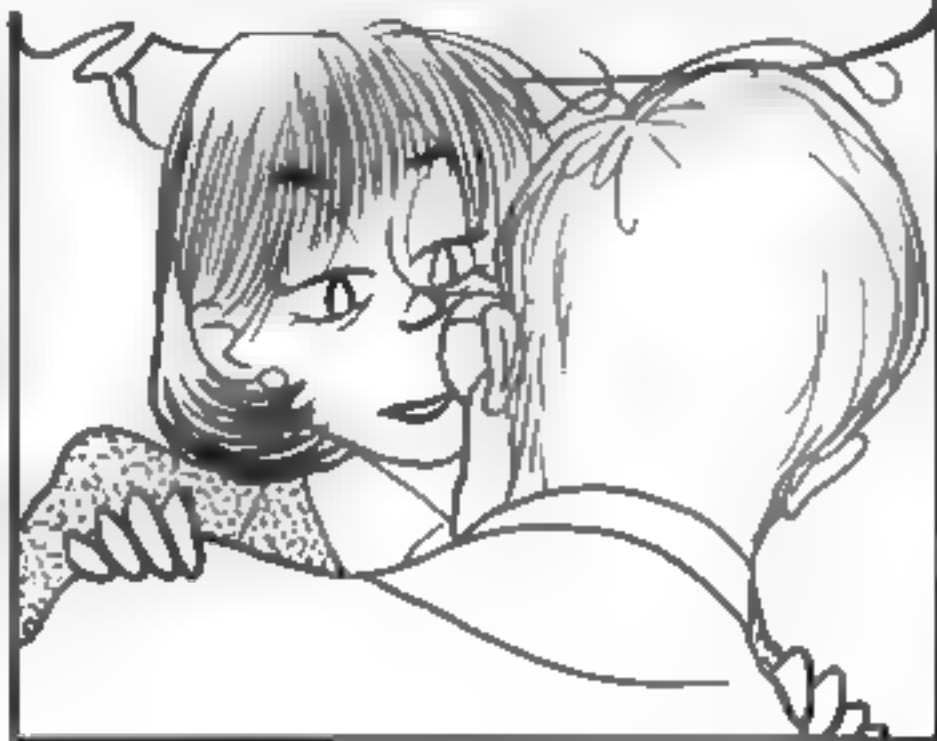


I REALLY HAVE TO GO...
...I'M DELIVERING A LONG
AND DETAILED ANALYSIS
TO THE TRUSTEES ABOUT
THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL
EDUCATION AT THE
UNIVERSITY.



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ALL RIGHT...AS JULIETTE
BURBER, FACULTY MEMBER,
I'LL RELEASE YOU. BUT AS
PANTHER WOMAN, JUNGLE
QUEEN, I'M WEARING AN
OCELOT-PRINT TEDDY...AND
IT HAS YOUR NAME ON IT.



GENTLEMEN,
I WILL BE
BRIEF.



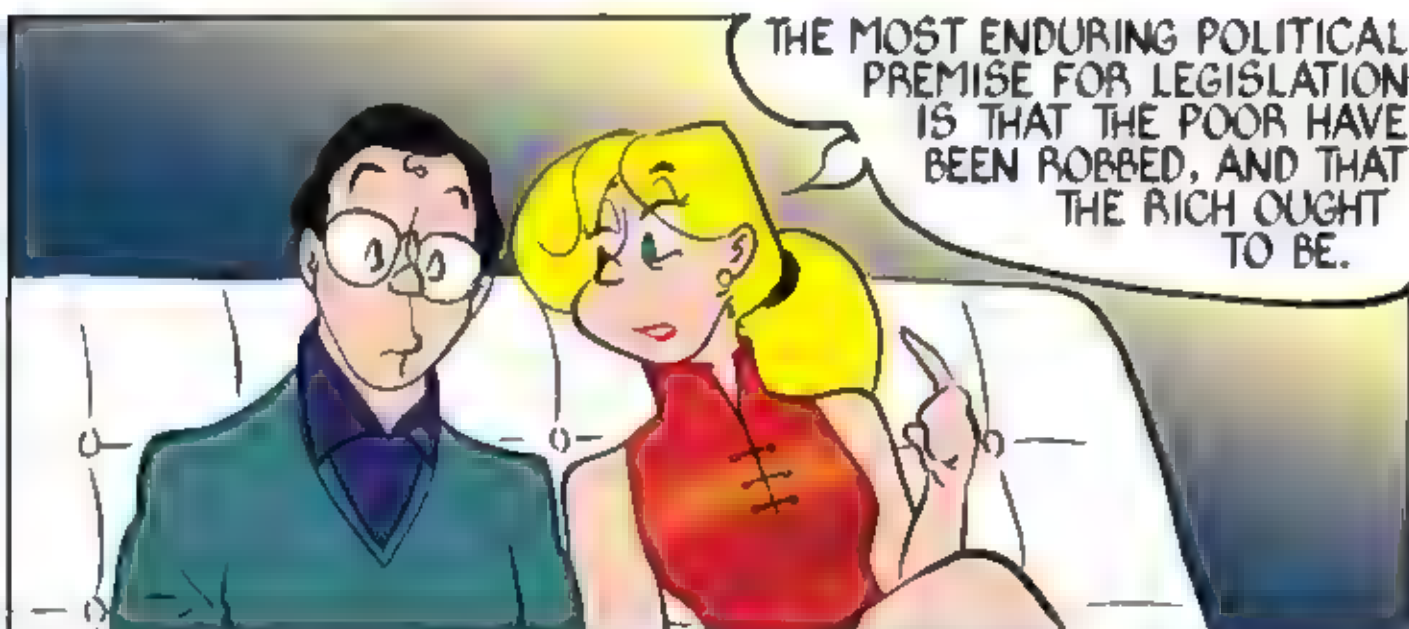
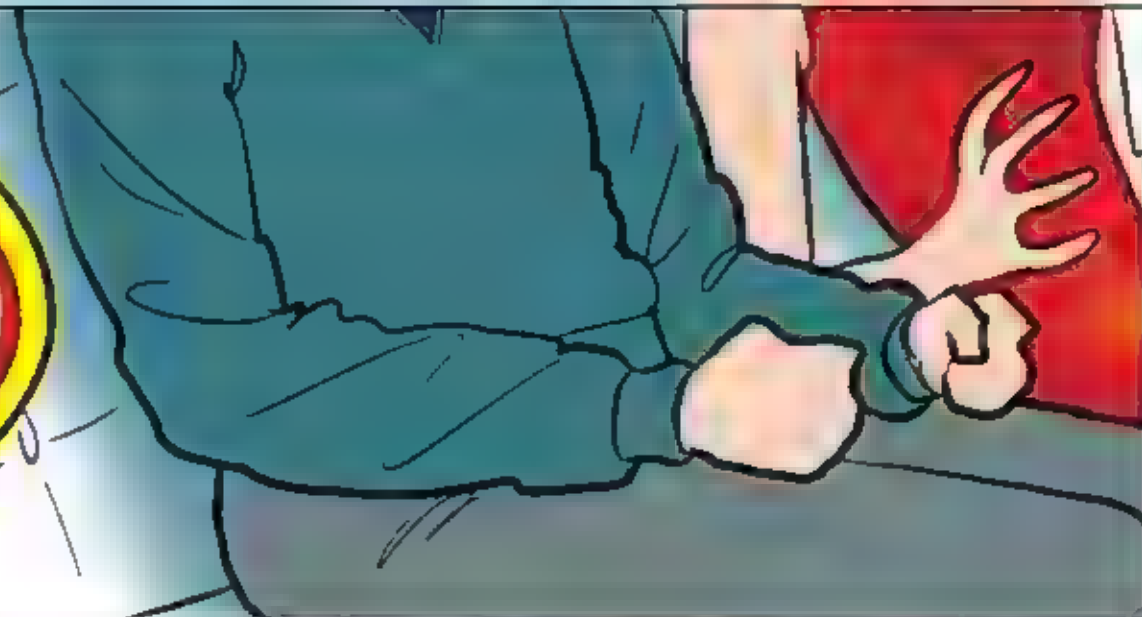
SOMETIMES WHEN THINGS
ARE JUST GETTING TO ME,
I WISH I COULD BE RIGHT
THERE TO TALK TO YOU.



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CLOSE YOUR
EYES...JUST
CLOSE YOUR
EYES.





JULIETTE, I DIDN'T MENTION
YOUR NAME, BUT I LET IT
SLIP THE OTHER DAY THAT
A WOMAN ON THE FACULTY
WEARS COURAGE-BOOSTING,
JUNGLE-ANIMAL PRINT, BODY-

SUITS
UNDER
HER
WORK
ATTIRE.



NO
PROBLEM.

THERE'LL
ALWAYS BE
ONLY ONE
PANTHER
WOMAN.



AM I THE
ONLY ONE WHO
HEARD THAT LIMB
CRACK?



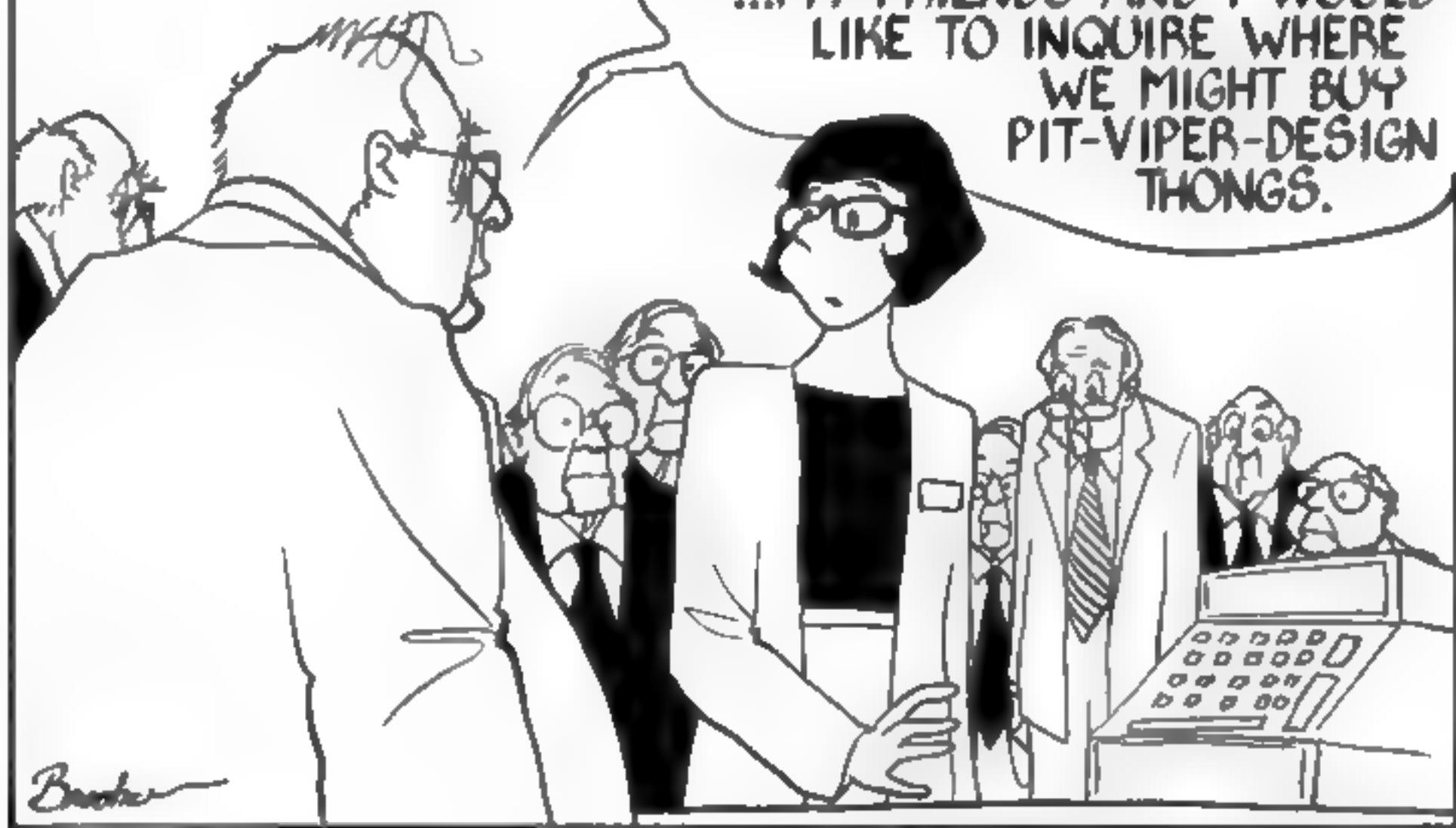
Brake

WORD SEEMS TO HAVE SPREAD TO THE TRUSTEES
THAT A WOMAN ON THE BIOLOGY FACULTY
IS WEARING JUNGLE-ANIMAL PRINT
UNDERWEAR.

SO
WHAT?
WHAT
HARM
CAN IT
DO?



EXCUSE ME, YOUNG WOMAN...
...MY FRIENDS AND I WOULD
LIKE TO INQUIRE WHERE
WE MIGHT BUY
PIT-VIPER-DESIGN
THONGS.



MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN A RESPECTED AND DIGNIFIED TRUSTEE OF THIS UNIVERSITY FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS...AND NOW, BECAUSE SOME WOMAN ON THE BIOLOGY FACULTY IS REPUTED TO BE WEARING JUNGLE ANIMAL UNDERGARMENTS, HE HAS ACQUIRED HIS OWN RATTLESNAKE THONG. IT HAS QUITE REJUVENATED OUR MARRIAGE.

Broder



IF YOU KNOW THIS WOMAN, JUST TELL HER THAT I THINK I SPEAK FOR ALL THE WIVES OF THE TRUSTEES WHEN I SAY THAT WE WILL HUNT HER DOWN AND SLIT HER THROAT FROM EAR TO EAR.

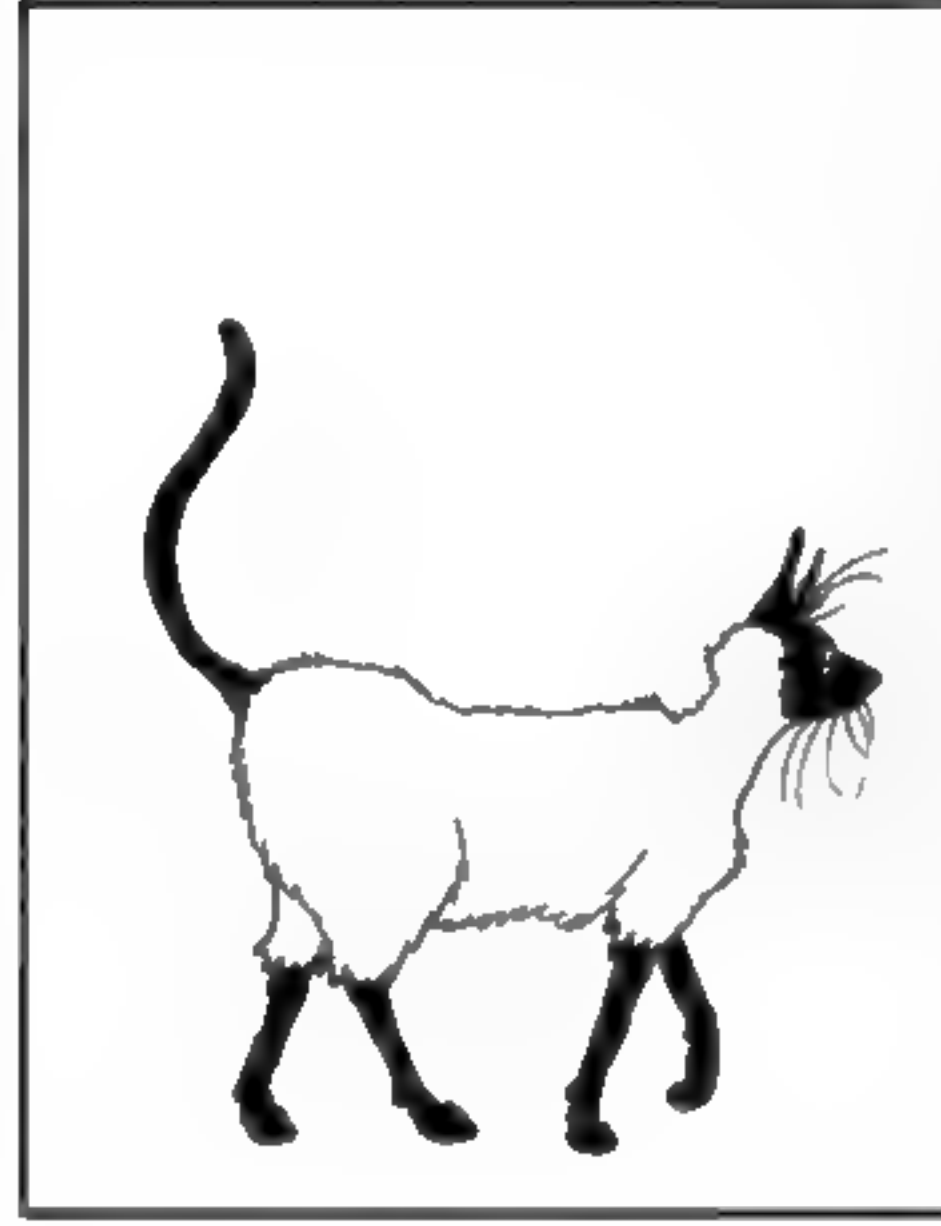
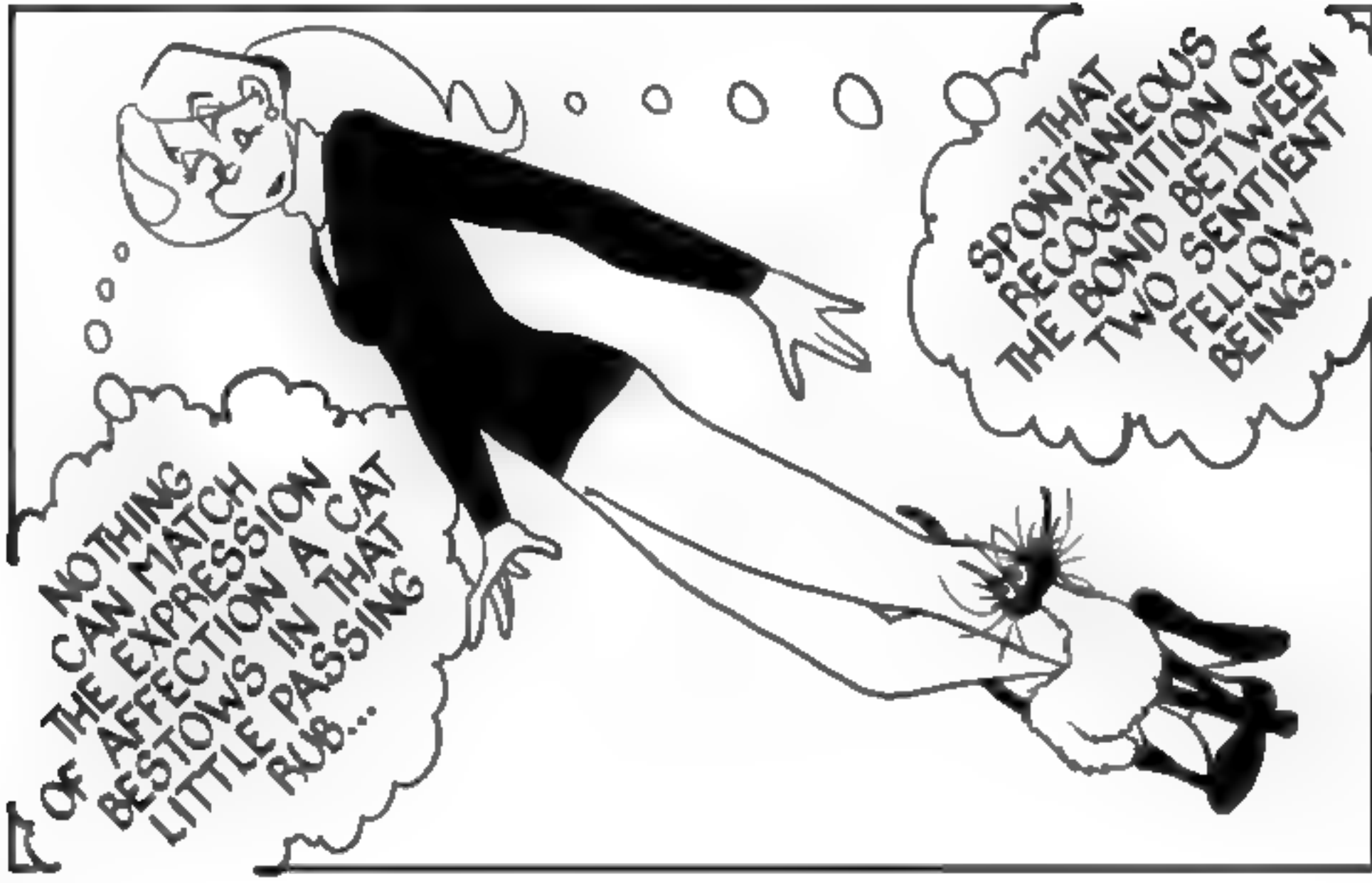


AND WHAT KIND OF UNDIES ARE YOU WEARING, DEAR?



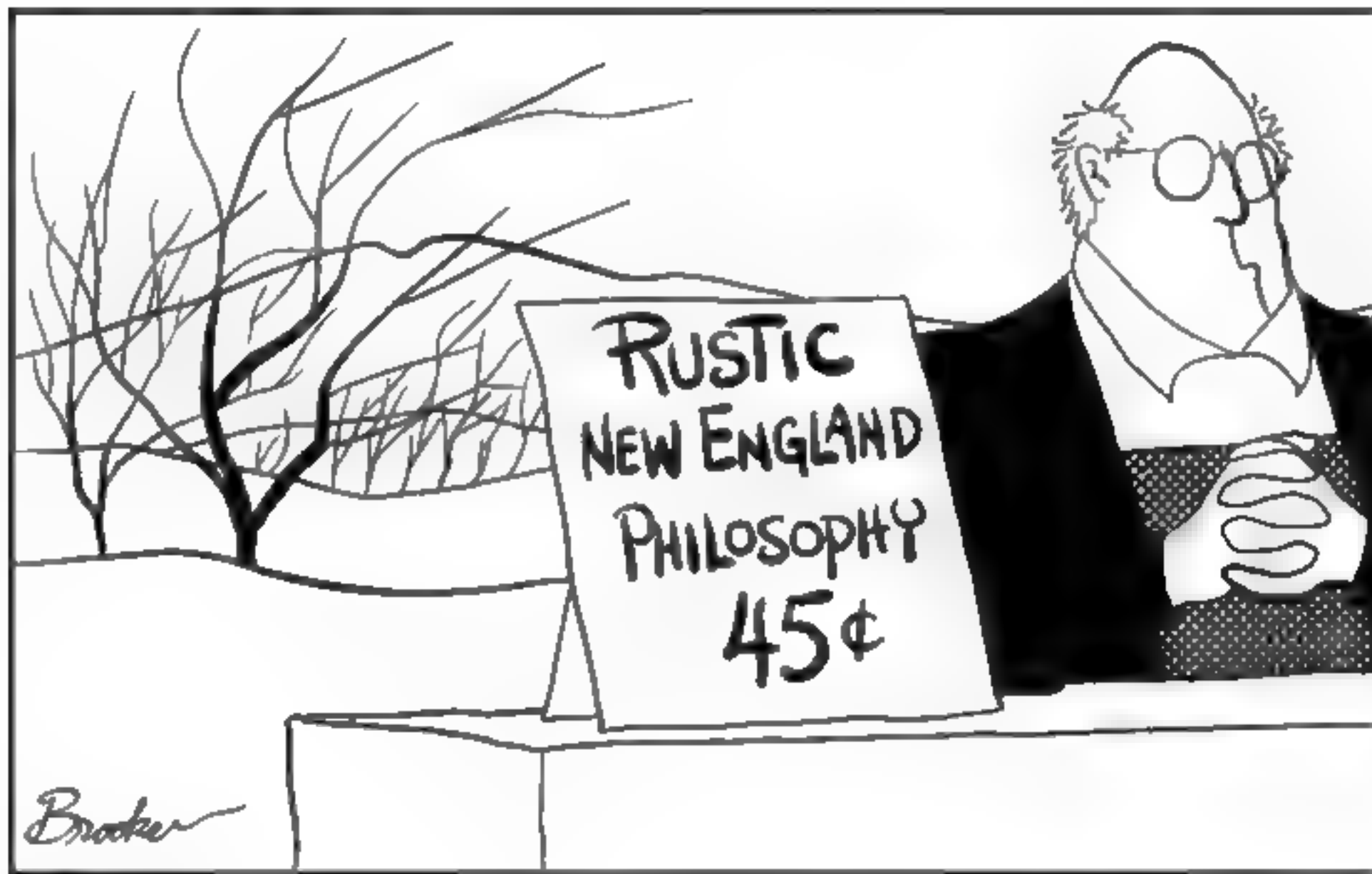
BURLAP, MA'AM.

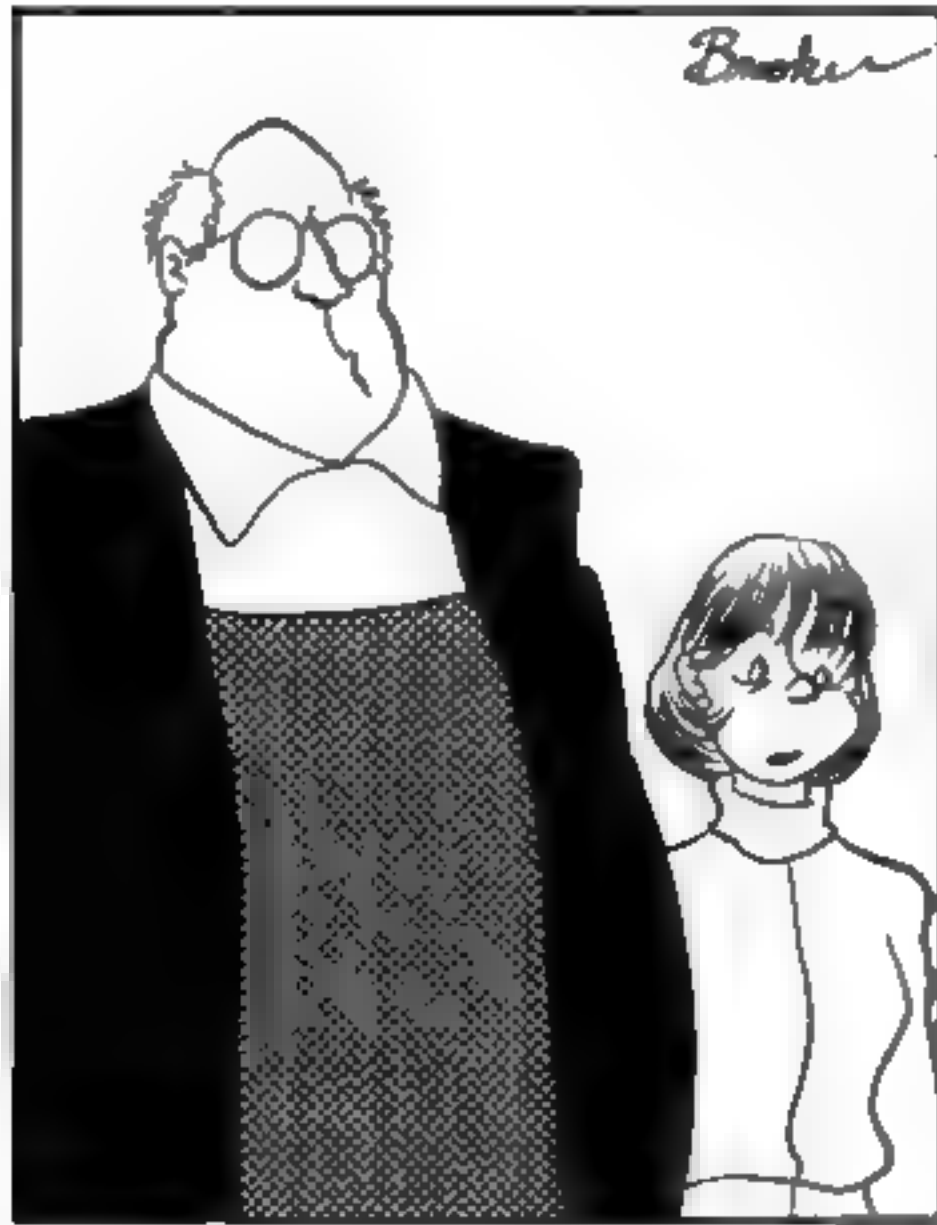




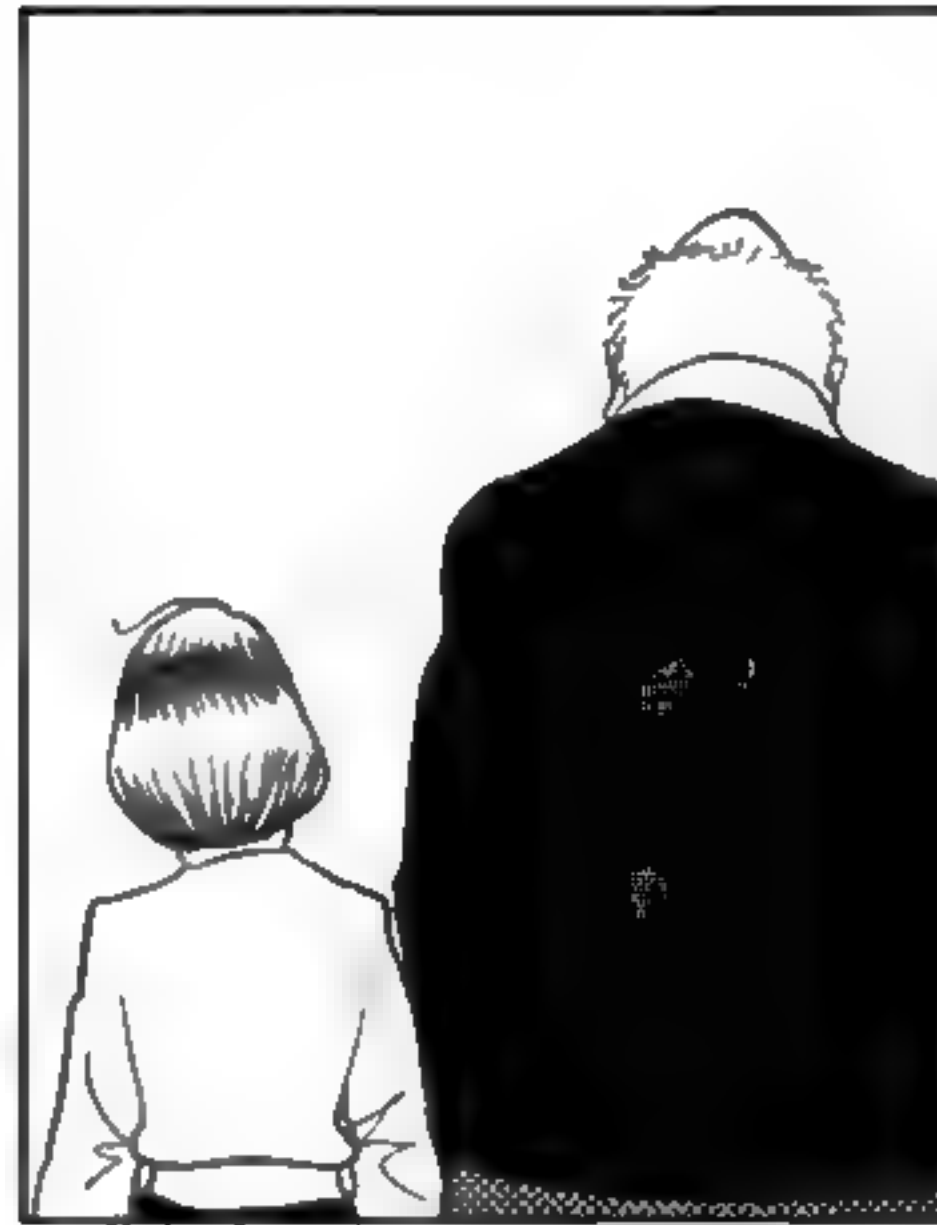
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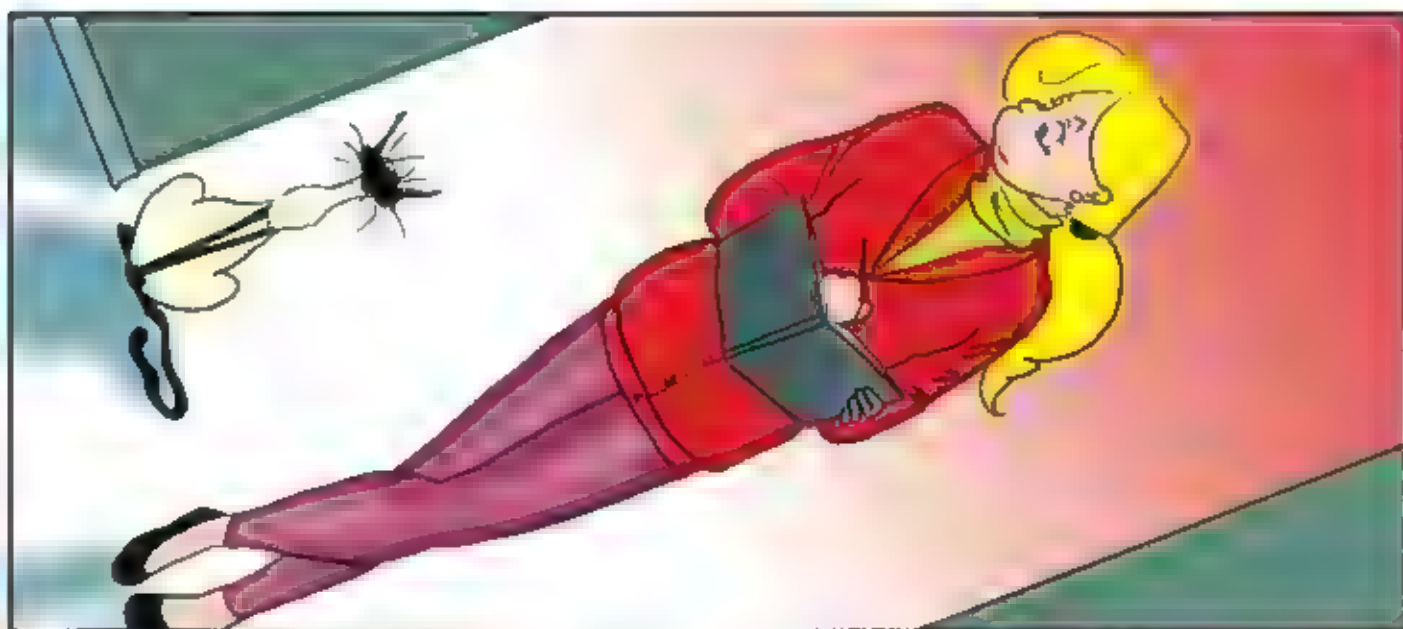




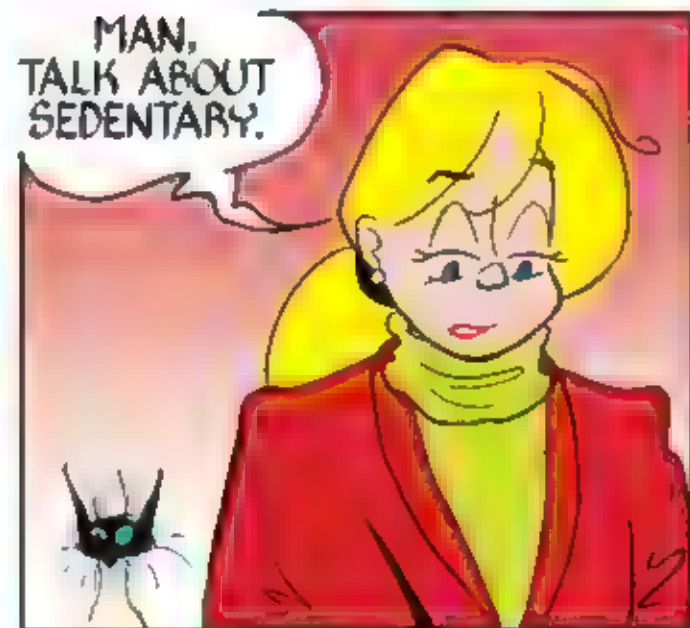
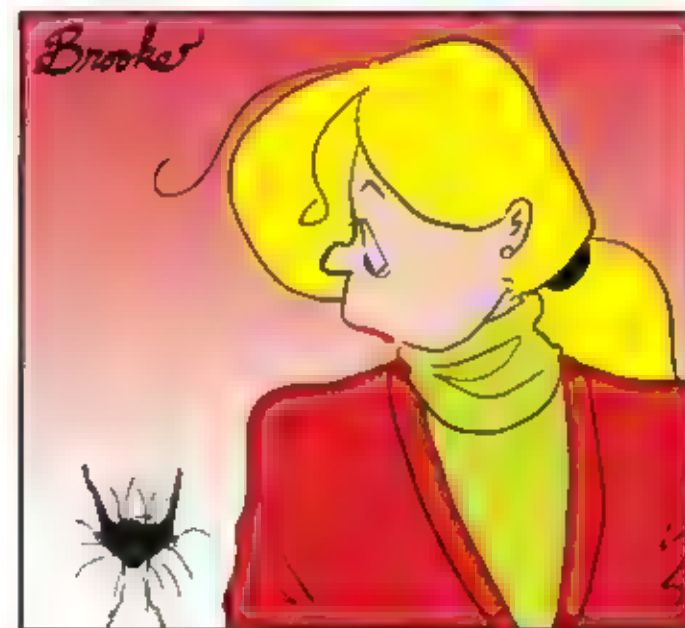
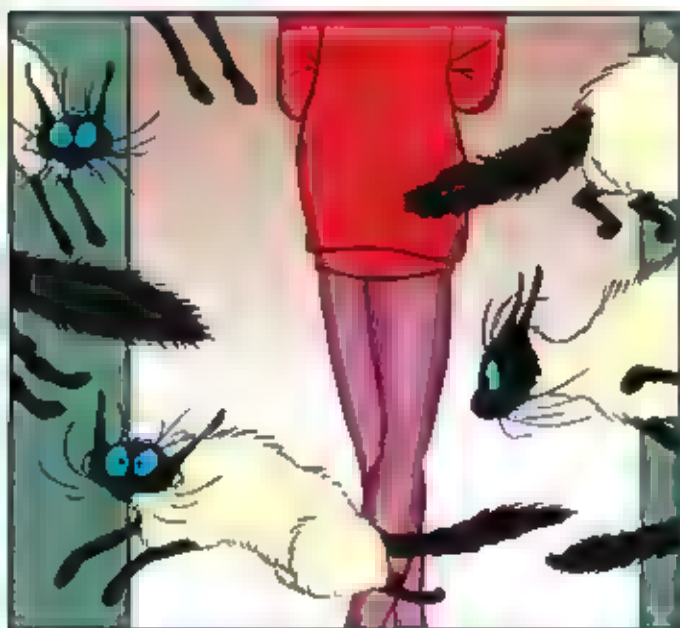


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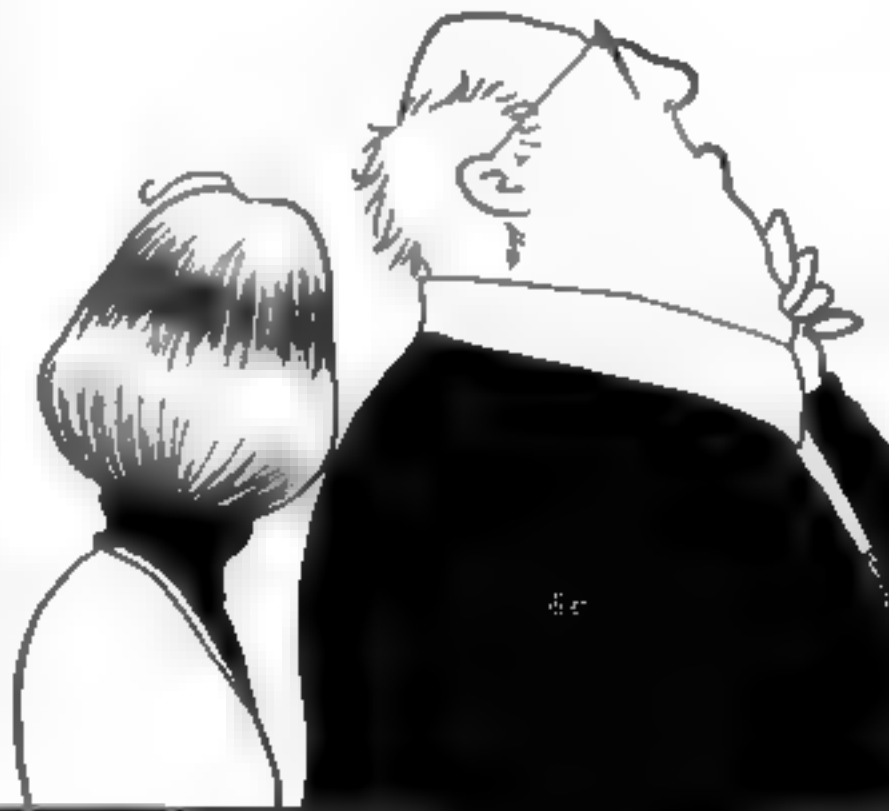
MAN,
TALK ABOUT
SEDENTARY.

HERE COMES THE
COUNTY AGENT.
JUST ACT
NORMAL.

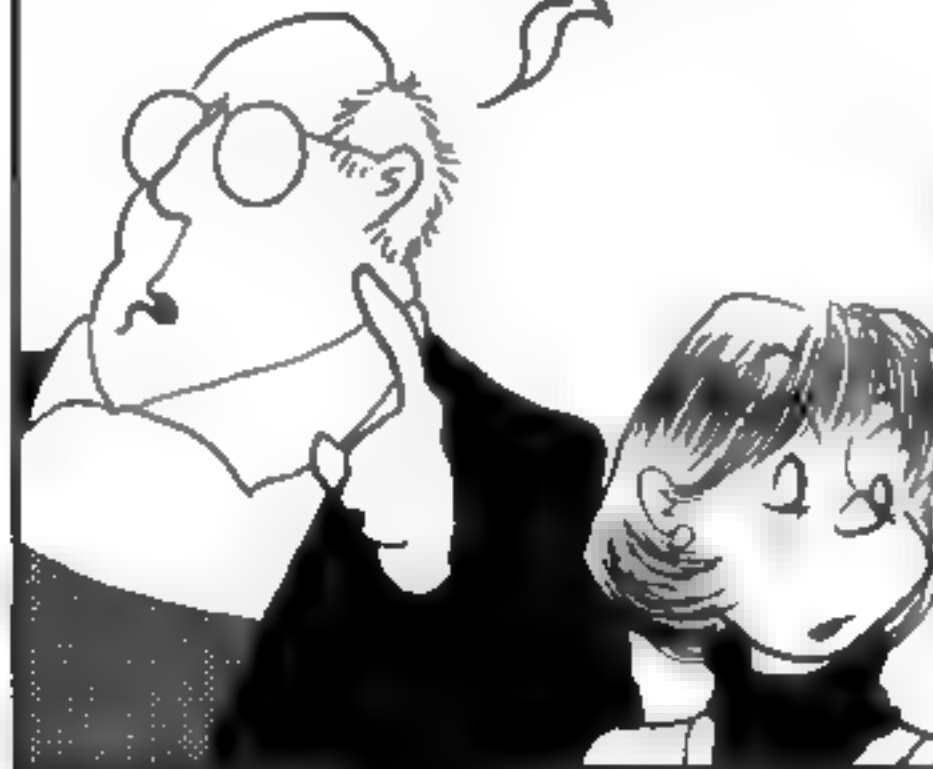


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RIGHT...I SHALL REQUIRE
TWO STOUT BRICKS,
A STICKY BUN, SIX
FEET OF TWINE,
A TURKEY BASTER...



I HAD
TO SAY
"NORMAL."
...A FEATHER BOA,
AND, IF YOU
CAN SPARE IT,
JUST A PINCH
OF VASELINE.



IN A WORLD WHERE THE CHEAPEST OF POLITICIANS
CONTROL THE LOT OF BILLIONS, WHERE LIFE HAS
NO CONSEQUENCE OR VALUE EXCEPT AS CANNON
FODDER, WHERE ONLY FALSEHOOD, CORRUPTION
AND INDECENCY HOLD THE UPPER
HAND SO INEVITABLY THAT
WE ACCEPT THEM
AND EVEN CAST
VOTES FOR THEIR
PRACTITIONERS...
...IN SUCH
A WORLD,
HOW CAN
TWO PEOPLE
DARE TO BE
IN LOVE?



ARE YOU
READY TO
TANGO?...THE
BANDONEON
WAITS FOR
NO MAN.

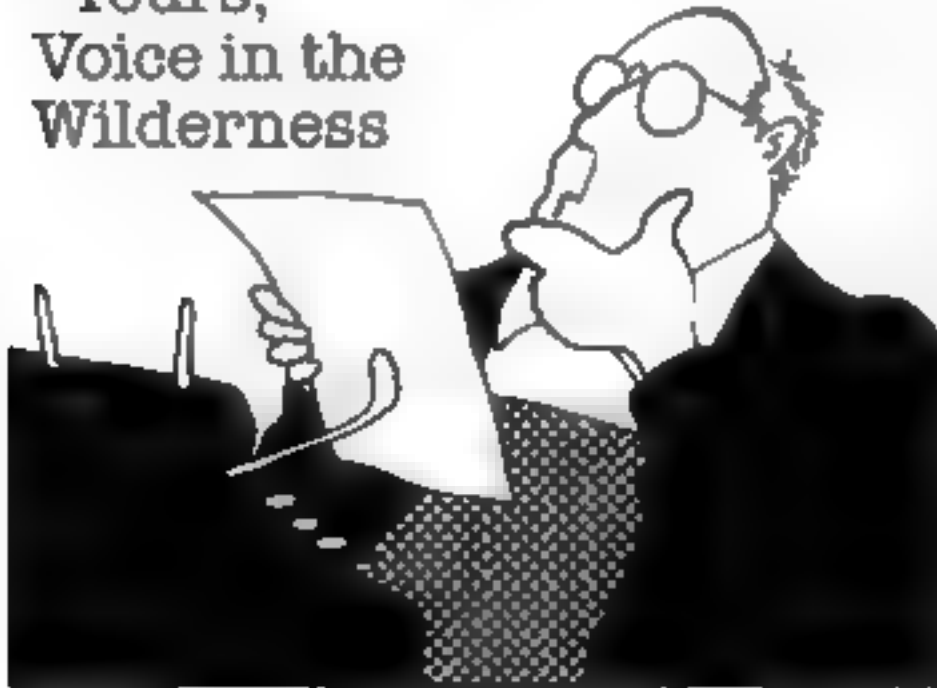


AND YET,
IT'S
SURPRISINGLY
EASY.



Dear Thorax,
I try to help my grown
children with the benefit of
my hard-won experience.
However, they never seem
to welcome it. Why won't
they listen?

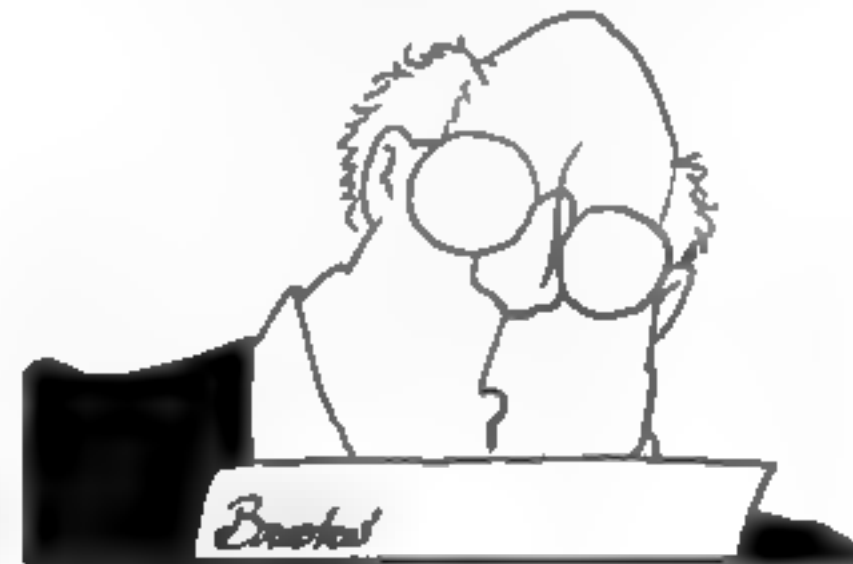
Yours,
Voice in the
Wilderness



Dear V. in the W.,
On my planet, one of the
highest and most
pathological crimes a
citizen can commit is that
of advice-giving.



After brief trials, the guilty
are sentenced to become
subjects of amusement
through gaudy executions.
However, when clemency
cannot be shown, those
found culpable of giving
advice are sentenced to
listen to it.



Mind your own business,
and let people revel
in their own successes
and disasters.
That is my advice; and if
you're the person I think
you are, you're already
ignoring it.







ONE REVIEWER SAID YOU PLAYED BRAHMS WITH
A SEETHING, UNBRIDLED PASSION...THE OTHER SAID
IT SOUNDED AS IF YOU WERE
DEBAUCHING
HIM IN
A CHEAP
MOTEL.

Brooke



9 CHICKWEED LANE

®

AUTOCRACY
CANNOT BE SUFFERED
WITH A SENSE
OF HUMOR.

DEMOCRACY
CANNOT BE
SUFFERED
WITHOUT
ONE.

ON MY WORLD,
DEMOCRACY
IS A FORM OF
ENTERTAINMENT...

...IN WHICH A CAPTIVE
AUDIENCE IS PRESENTED
WITH A BROAD SELECTION
OF IDIOTS AND LIARS...

...AND TOLD
TO 'SQUANDER ITS
VOTES ON THEM...

THEN SUBMIT
TO THEIR
GOVERNANCE.

WHAT'S IT LIKE
HERE?

OH,
SHUT
UP.

Brooke

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**A LOCUTIONARY
FIELD GUIDE TO EARTH
(THE HARD LITTLE PLANET
WITH THE SOFT CENTER)**

**DEMOCRACY: NOUN, INFORMAL.
A FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN WHICH
PEOPLE, FACED WITH THE PROSPECT
OF SELF-RULE, CAST THE JOB INTO
AN EXCLUSIVE MIRE OF UNSKILLED
PANDERS.**



**IN EARLIER TIMES,
ENTIRE WARS WERE
WAGED FOR THE STATED
PURPOSE OF PROTECTING
DEMOCRACY. NOW WARS
ARE WAGED TO PROTECT
FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY
HAVING BEEN ABOLISHED
TOWARD THAT END.**

Banker

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ALLEGIANCE: NOUN.
AN UNDEFINED WORD
SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE
TAUGHT TO PLEDGE
DAILY TOWARD A FLAG
OTHERWISE IGNORED.

THE PURPOSE OF
THE PLEDGE IS
TO TEACH THE YOUNG
THAT ALLEGIANCE
HAS A SHELF LIFE
LIMITED TO
24 HOURS.

Boeker



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TRUTH: NOUN.
THAT WHICH MOST
EASILY APPEALS
TO THE FEARS,
HOPES AND
PREJUDICES
OF THE HEARER;
I.E., A LIE.



LIE: NOUN.
THAT WHICH
CAUSES ITS
UTTERER TO
BE REVILED;
I.E.,
THE TRUTH.

Booker

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FRIENDSHIP: NOUN.



THAT WHICH
UNITES PERSON 1
WITH PERSON 2
THROUGH THEIR
MUTUAL HATRED
OF PERSON 3.



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"NOTHING IS PERFECT"

A PHRASE TO DENOTE
THAT THE SPEAKER IS
FAMILIAR ENOUGH WITH
PERFECTION TO STATE
CATEGORICALLY THAT
IT DOES NOT EXIST.

COMPARE THIS
WITH THE PREACHER
WHO IS UNFAMILIAR
ENOUGH WITH HELL
TO STATE THAT
IT DOES.

Broder



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DECEIT: NOUN.



A DOG ROLLS ON THE
CARCASS OF A DEAD
POSSUM IN ORDER
TO DECEIVE OTHER
ANIMALS REGARDING
HIS IDENTITY AS
A DOG.

A MAN LOLS IN
THE SCENTS OF A
CHURCH IN ORDER
TO DECEIVE HIMSELF
REGARDING HIS
IDENTITY AS A THIEF,
AN ADULTERER AND
A LIAR.

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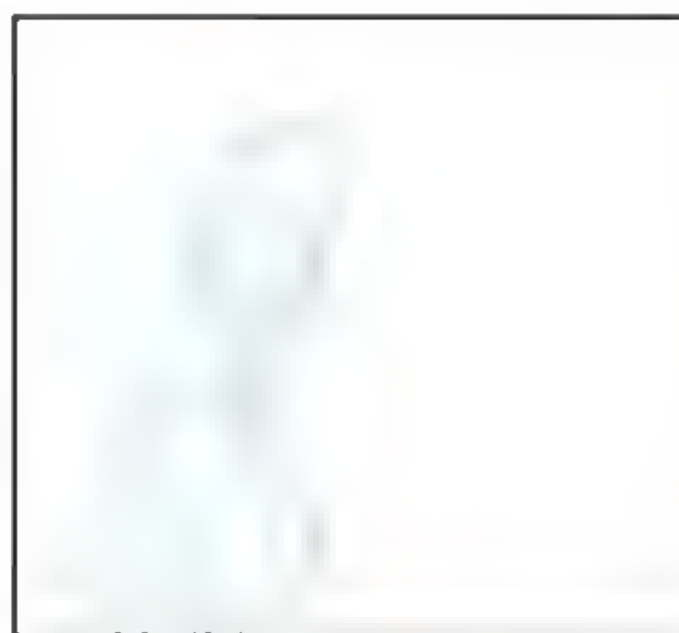
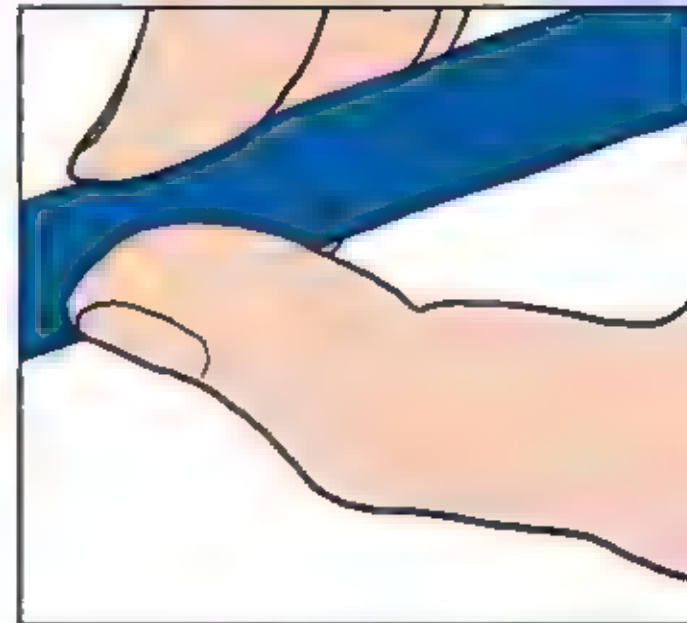
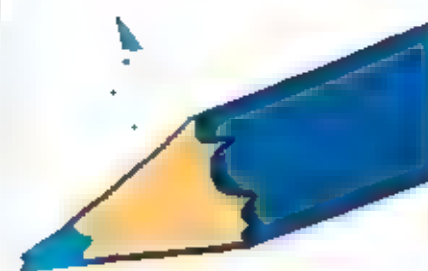
THE DIFFERENCE
IS THAT THE DOG
DOES NOT FIRST
HAVE TO ENDURE
BEING BORED BY
THE POSSUM.





®

Brooke

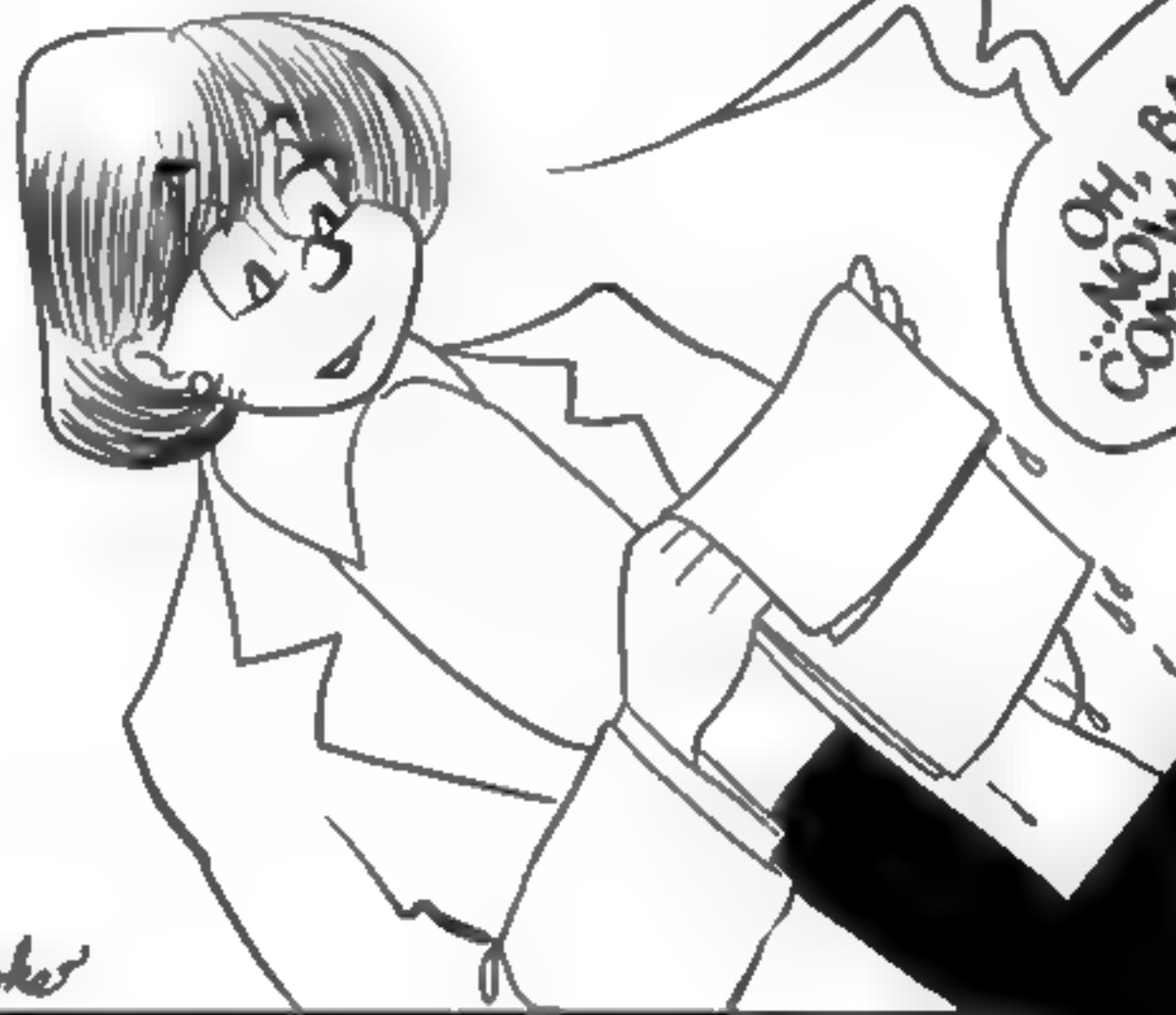


DR. BURBER,
HOW COMPREHENSIVE
WILL THIS EXAM
BE?



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WELL, I KNOW THIS MAY
SEEM PIE-IN-THE-SKY, BUT
I NEVER FEEL AN EXAM
IS REALLY GOOD
UNLESS IT
COMES BACK
SOAKED IN
FLOP SWEAT.



OH, BABY...
...NOW THAT'S
COMPREHENSIVE.

Brooks





UM...DR. BURBER...BEFORE
WE BEGIN THIS EXAM, MAY
I RUN SHRIEKING INTO THE
NIGHT...MY NAKED, BLOATED
CORPSE TO BE DISCOVERED
DAYS FROM NOW ON A
DESOLATE HEATH,
EYES
TRANSFIXED
WITH
A LOOK
OF SHEER
TERROR?



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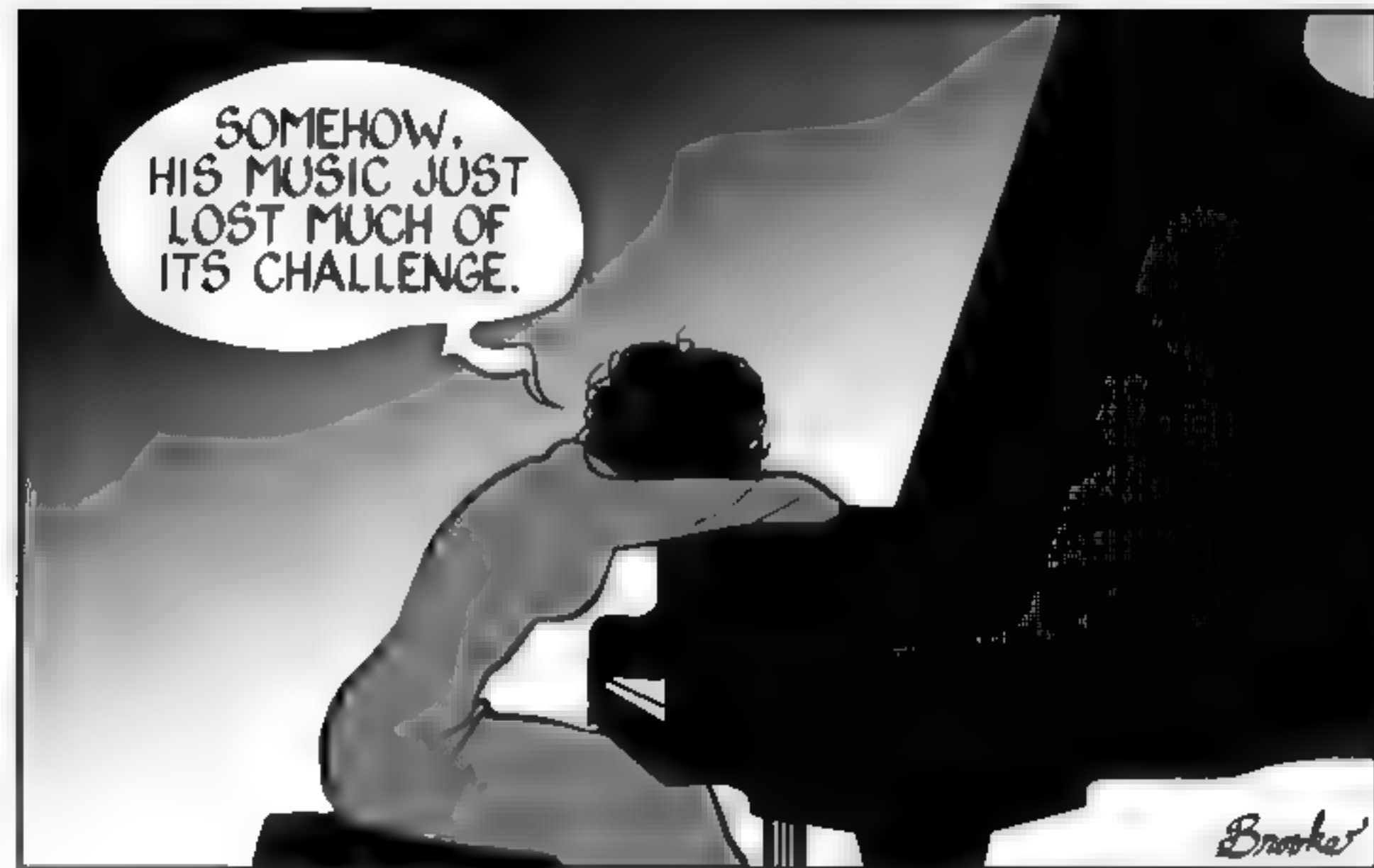
LOVE: NOUN.

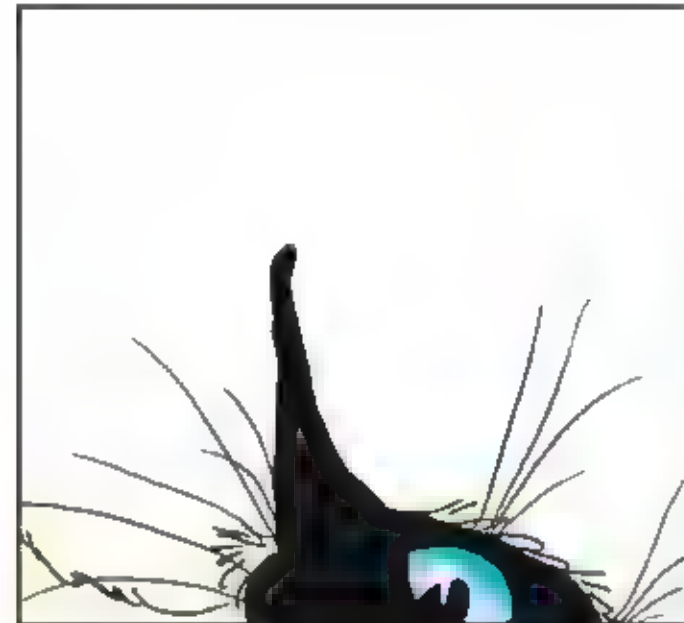
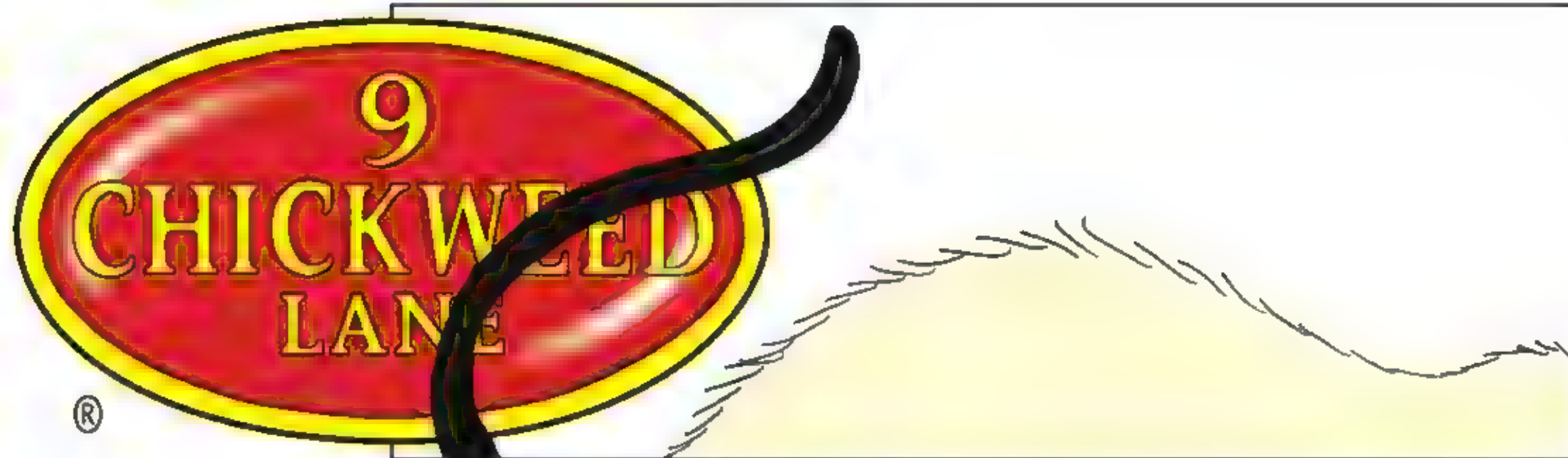


WHEN
REPEATED ACTS
OF PASSIONATE
INTIMACY
LEAD TO THE
EXCHANGE
OF NAMES.

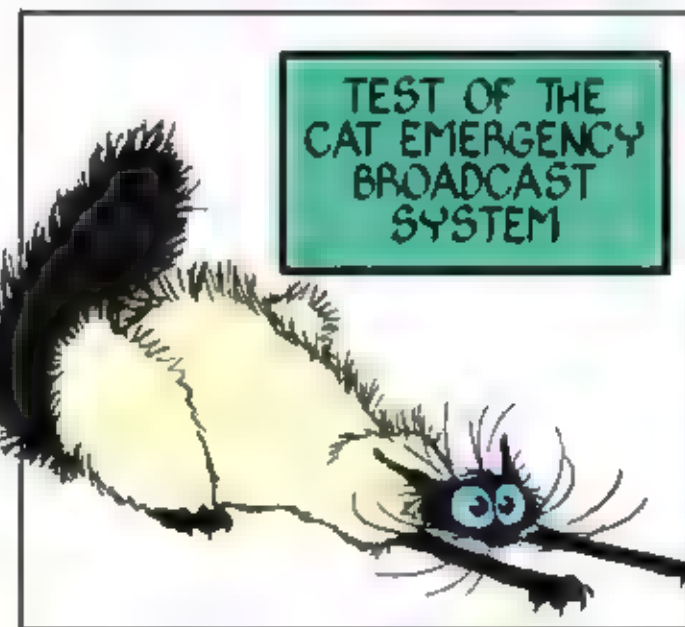
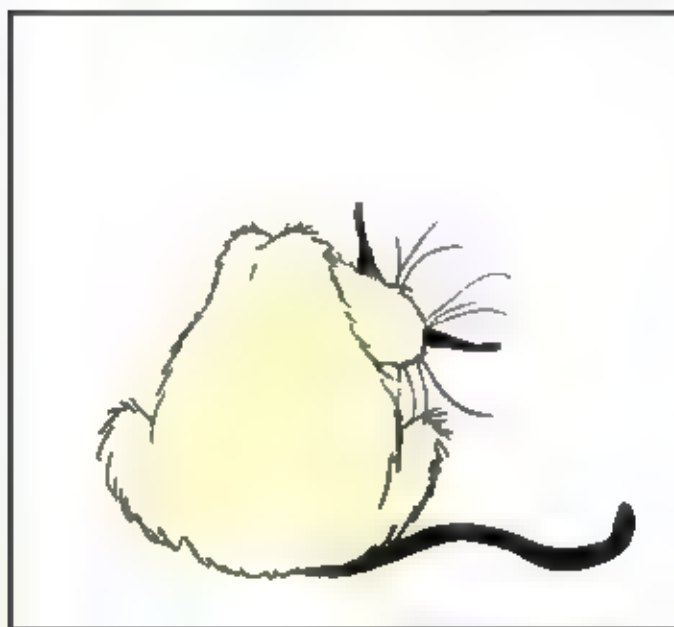


Brooke





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TEST OF THE
CAT EMERGENCY
BROADCAST
SYSTEM

RETURN
TO REGULAR
PROGRAMMING



WHEN I PLAY BRAHMS, IF I CAN'T FEEL AS IF I'M SEDUCING HIM - TEARING HIM FROM THE ARMS OF HIS WIFE - I'LL TURN MY EFFORTS TO CHOPIN.



CHOPIN WASN'T MARRIED EITHER, ALTHOUGH HE LIVED WITH A WOMAN NAMED AMANDINE-AUORE-LUCILE WHO LIKED TO BE CALLED GEORGE.



IT'S ALL TOO EASY.

OF COURSE, IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION, ANYTHING YOU WOULD DO WITH HIM WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE KILLED HIM IN MID-PRELUDE.



Brooke

DON'T TOY WITH MY EMOTIONS!



NEWS FROM THE HOME FRONT...
THE GOVERNMENT OF MY WORLD
PROCLAIMS THE COMMENCEMENT
OF HOSTILITIES AGAINST ALL
OTHER PLANET
SYSTEMS IN
OUR ARM
OF THE
GALAXY.

THAT'S IT?! JUST
A DECLARATION
OF WAR?...
NOTHING FURTHER?...
NO STATEMENT OF CAUSE,
NO LIST OF GRIEVANCES,
NO LITANY OF JUSTIFICATIONS?
DOES THE
DISPATCH
SAY
NOTHING
ELSE?

Brooke



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TOLERANCE: NOUN.

THE IMPLICIT
AFFIRMATION
THAT THERE IS
SOMETHING ABOUT
NEARLY EVERYBODY
ELSE THAT MUST
BE TOLERATED.



Brooke

Brooks

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THE HEADLINE SAYS,
"PSYCHOPATH GOES ON
RAMPAGE."

IS THIS A DEATH-DEALING,
CRAZED, RAMPAGING
PSYCHOPATH?...OR A
DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED,
LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD,
RAMPAGING PSYCHOPATH?



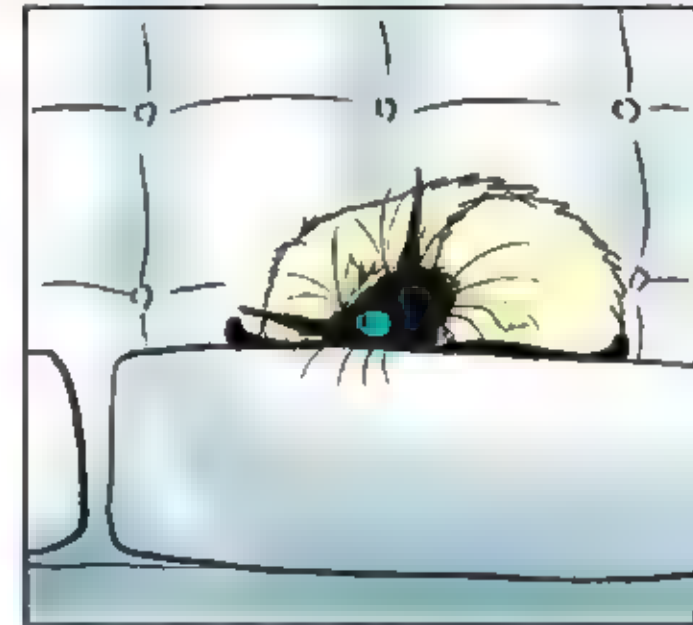
I HAVE TO
ADMIT, THE
DISTINCTION
IS FUZZY.

WELL,
WHILE YOU
QUEST FOR
CLARITY,
COULD I
HAVE THE
FUNNIES?

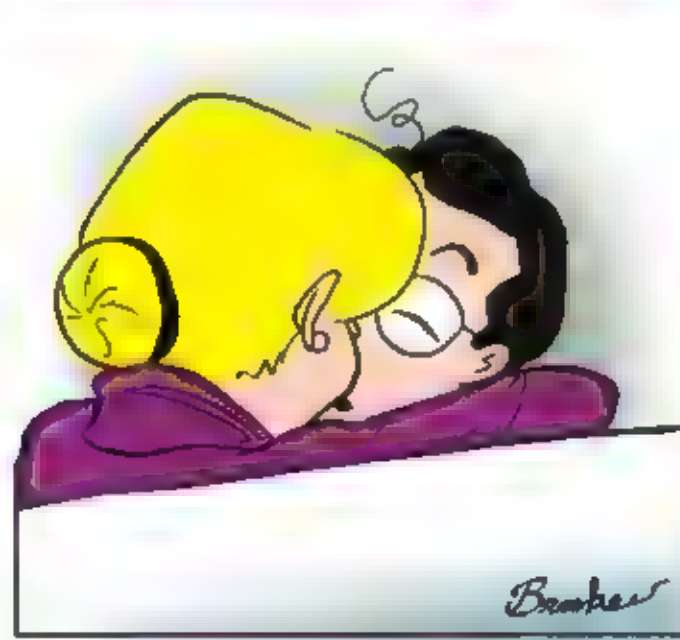




9 CHICKWEED LANE



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I'M IN COMMUNICATION WITH A DISTANT CIVILIZATION,
A GROUP OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL ENTITIES WHO REACHED
OUT TO ME VIA MY QUANTUM
ANOMALY IN THE TRACTOR SHED,
AND, IN A GALVANIZING BOLT OF
PURE ENERGY, EXTRACTED MY
LIFE FORCE
FOR 37
MINUTES.



Brooke

tappy tappy tappy
tap
close.



"IT WAS GOOD FOR ME,
WAS IT GOOD FOR YOU"...?



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SO, YOUR LIFE WAS SUCKED
FROM YOU IN AN INTER-
GALACTIC
ASSAULT
OF PURE
ENERGY...

FOR 37
MINUTES.

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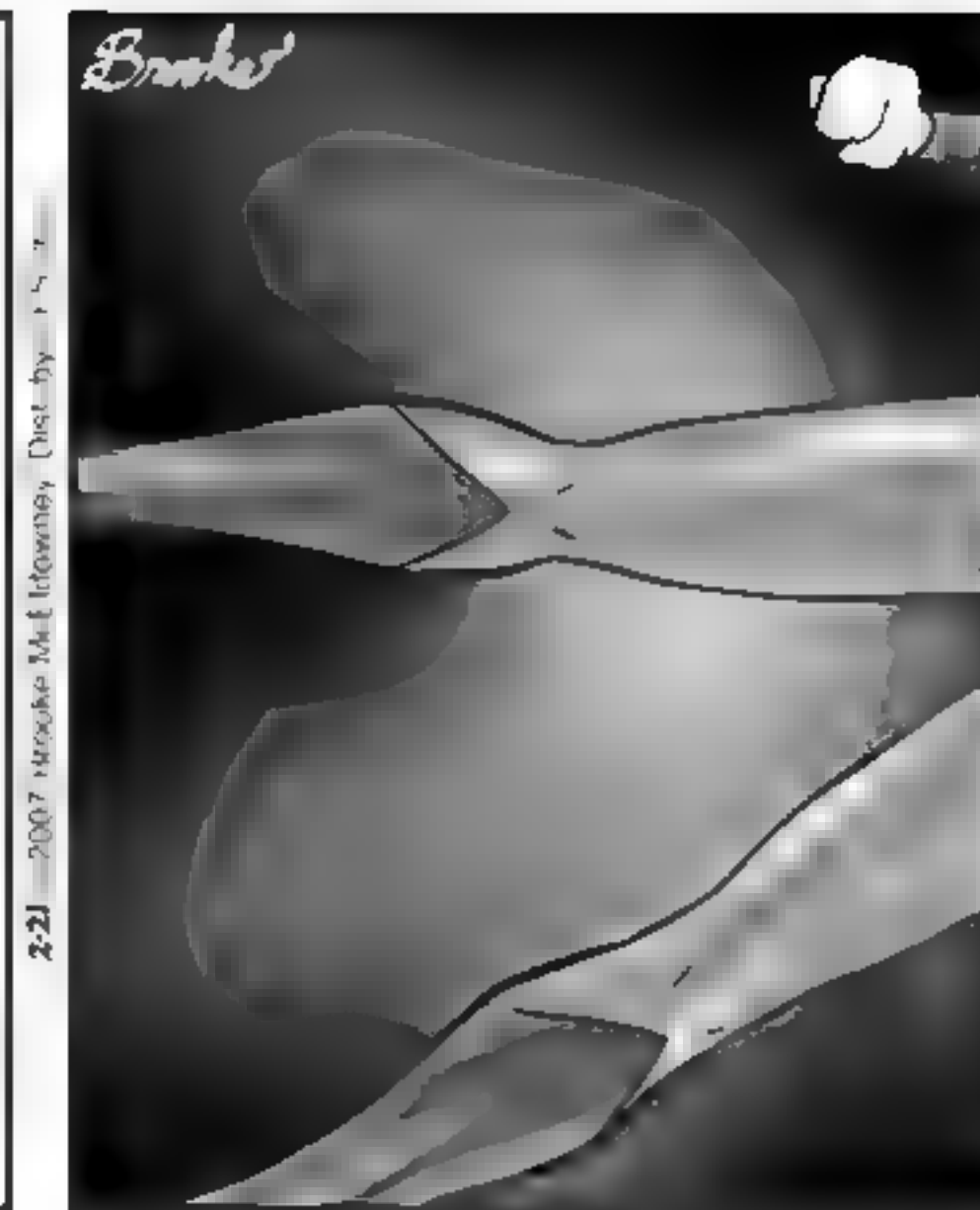
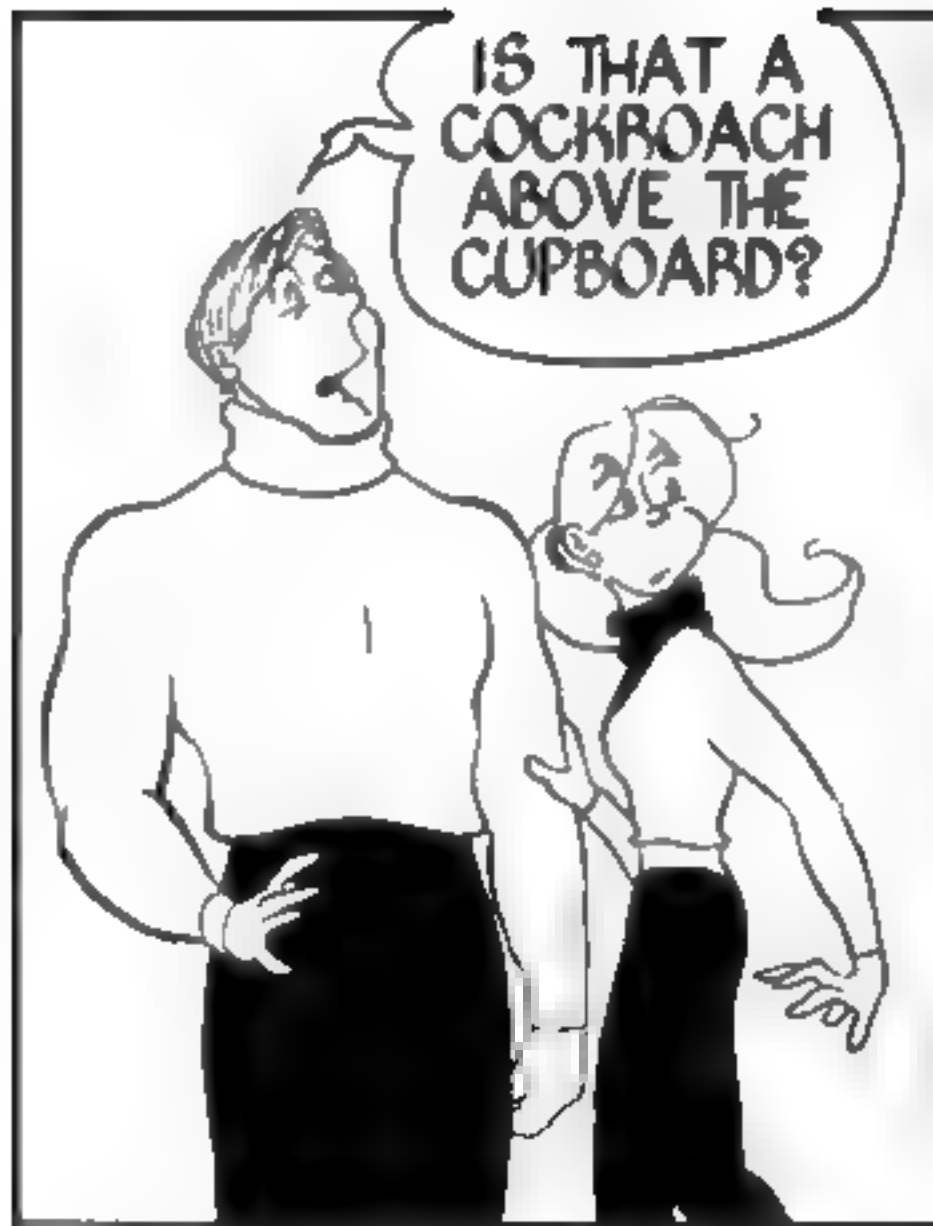
AND YET YOU PROVIDE
NO PROOF...NOTHING
TO SHOW FOR IT...
...NO DISCERNIBLE
MARKS.

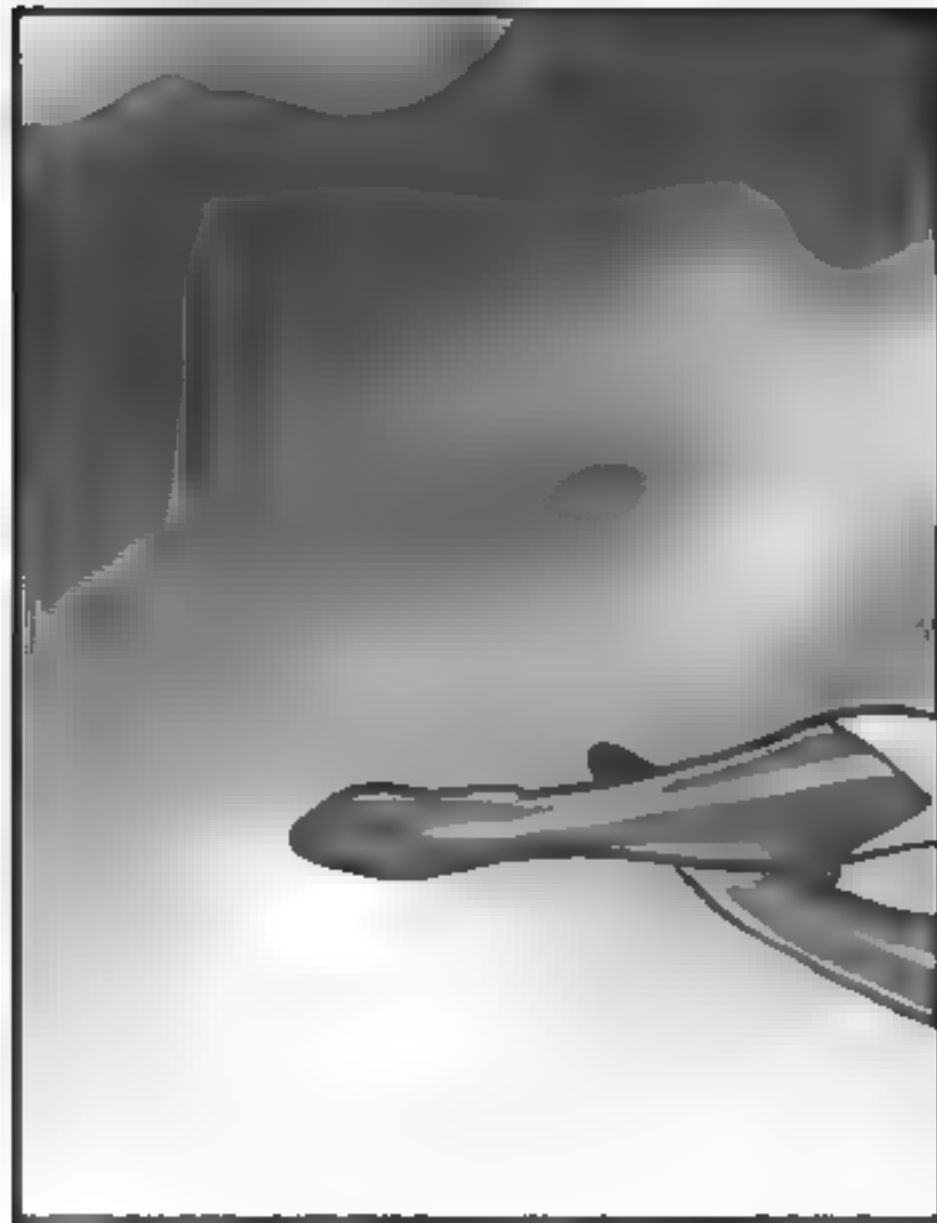
I DO FEEL...HOW CAN
I DESCRIBE IT...

CHANGED?

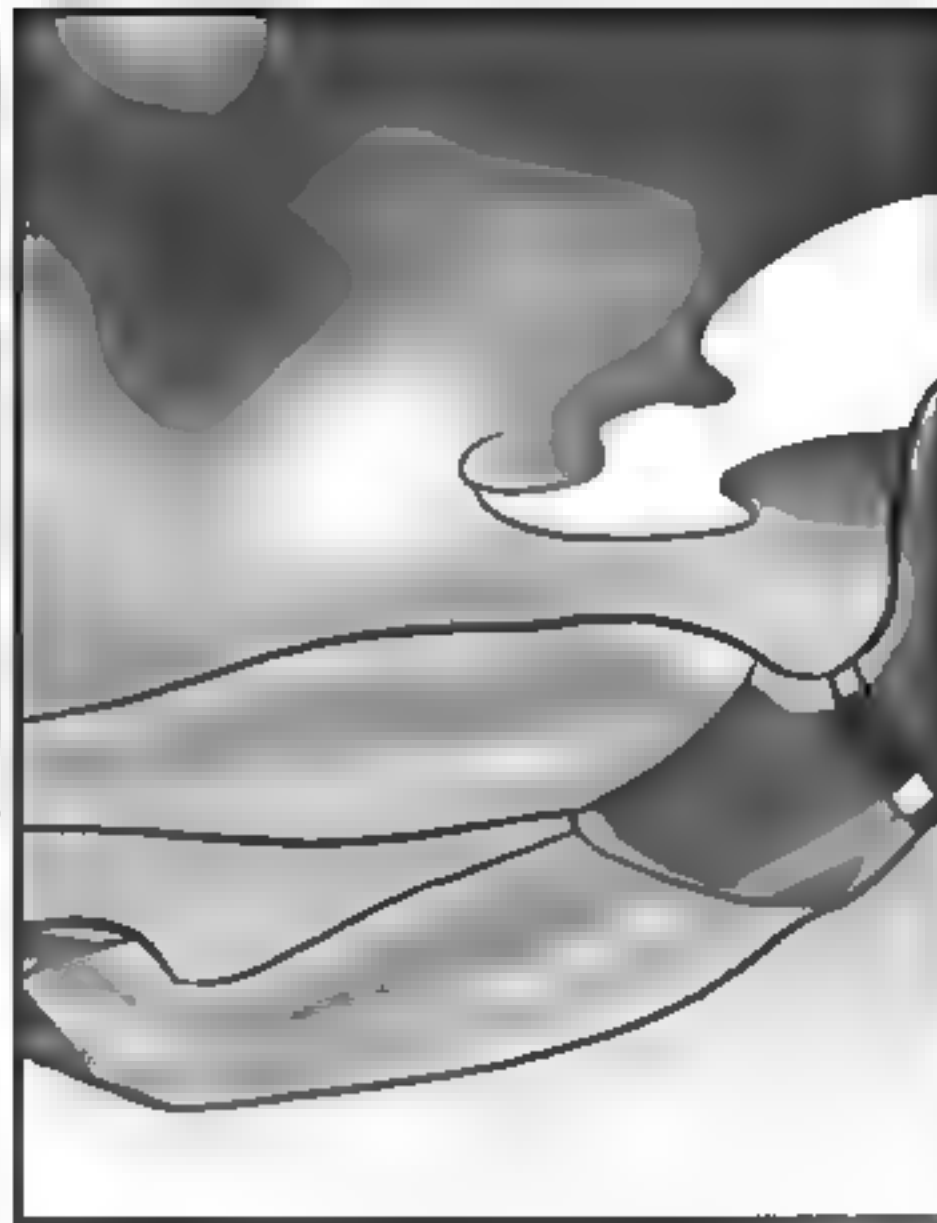
MORE...
...ROTATED
AND
BALANCED.

Brooks





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Brooke

IS IT REALLY NECESSARY
TO KILL COCKROACHES
WITH YOUR
FIST?

JUST
KEEP WIPING
AND DON'T
ASK SO MANY
QUESTIONS.



YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES
I THINK ABOUT GROWING
MY HAIR SO I CAN HAVE
A PONYTAIL LIKE YOURS.



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THEN
I THINK
AGAIN.



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WITH THE SOFT CENTER)

ACCORD, NOUN:

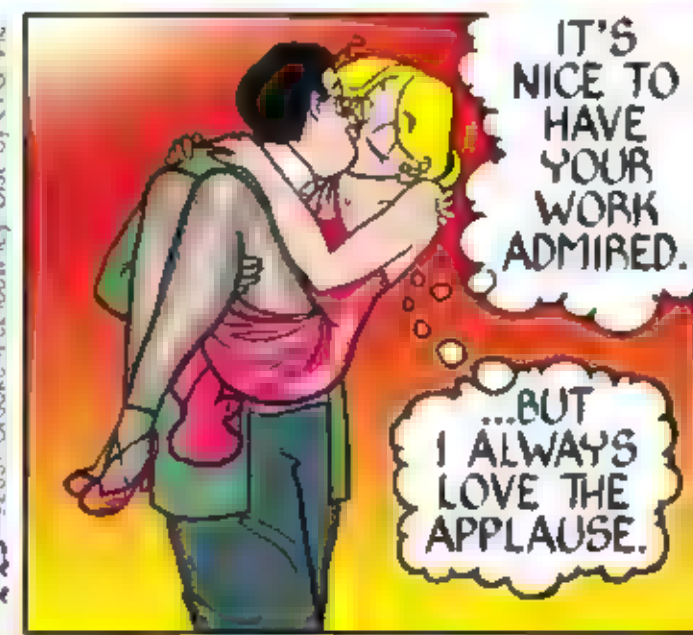
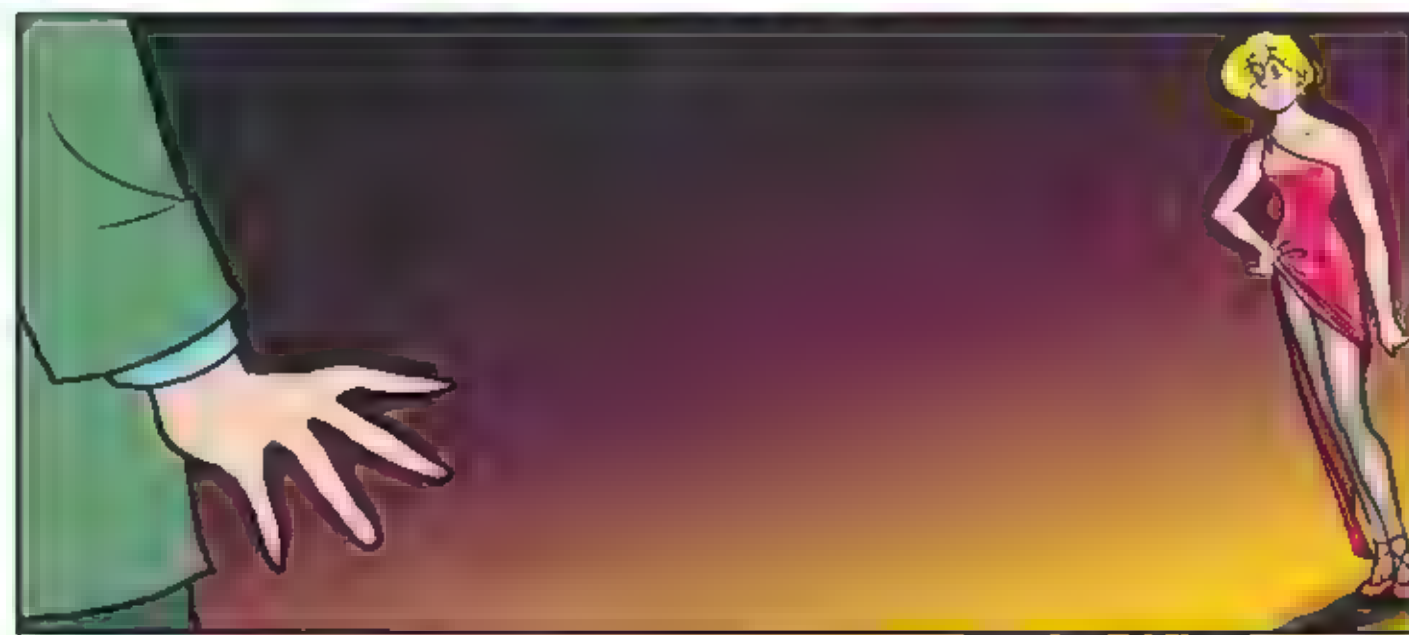
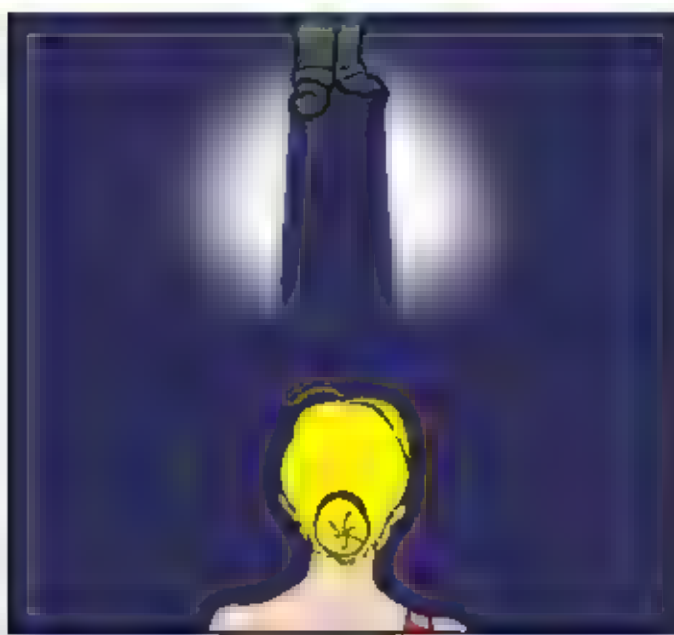
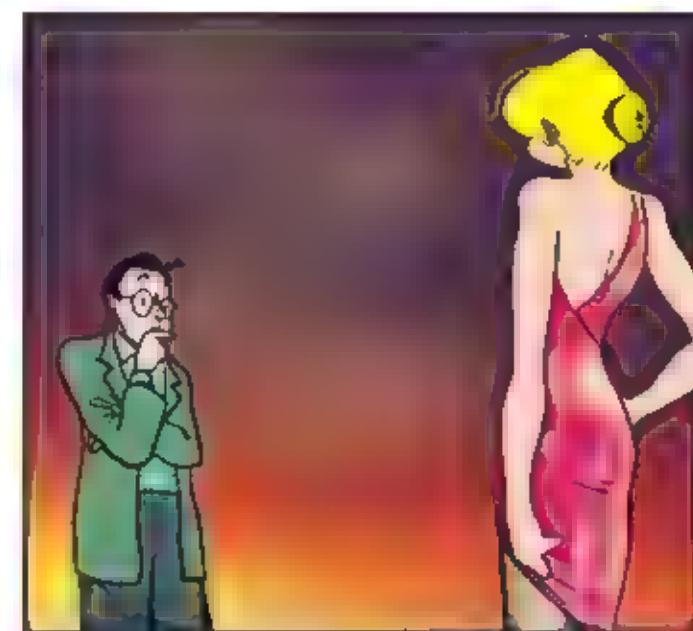


WHEN ALL PEOPLE
CAN UNITE IN THEIR
BELIEF THAT GOD
IS IN HIS HEAVEN.

ACCORDION, NOUN:



WHEN
ALL PEOPLE
CANNOT.



BOY, THERE'S
A DRESS
THAT WILL
SET YOU
BACK.

IT'S WHAT
I'M GOING
TO WEAR, IF
I CAN GET
OVER THE
NERVES.



YOU GUYS
MUST BE GLAD
TO BE PAST ALL
THAT...HOW
LONG HAVE
YOU BEEN
MARRIED?



Brooke



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...HELLO?



DID YOU ASK HOW LONG WE'VE BEEN MARRIED?
YOU MEAN, US?! HIM AND ME?! YOU THINK
WE'RE MARRIED?! AMOS, DID
YOU HEAR
THAT?!?



Brooke





I DON'T KNOW WHY I RAN
WHEN THAT WOMAN SAID
SHE THOUGHT EDDA AND I
WERE MARRIED...I GUESS
I FELT AS IF I'D
GONE FROM BIRTH
TO SPOUSE WITH
NOTHING IN
BETWEEN.



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YOU
SHOULD
TALK TO
EDDA
ABOUT
IT.

I DON'T NEED
TO...I KNOW
WHAT SHE'D
SAY, AND SHE
KNOWS WHAT
I'D SAY. SHE'S
MY BEST FRIEND
AND THE LOVE
OF MY LIFE.



MAYBE THOSE
ARE THE WORDS
YOU SHOULD
SAY TO HER.



Brooke

IT'S AS
IF WE ARE
MARRIED.
...THE SHEER
HORROR!

OKAY,
AND THOSE
ARE THE
WORDS
YOU
SHOULDN'T.



WHEN THAT WOMAN SAID
SHE THOUGHT YOU AND
EDDA WERE MARRIED,
THAT WAS NOT THE
TIME TO BOLT LIKE
A GAZELLE.

MAYBE
THERE'S
SOMETHING
DEEPER
UNDERLYING
IT...DO YOU
THINK MAYBE
I'M GAY?

OH,
SWEETIE,
IF ONLY.

Brooke

HEY,
GUYS.
WHAT'S
UP?

I WAS JUST
ASKING SETH IF
HE THINKS
I'M GAY...

...AND
HE SAID,
"OH SWEETIE,
IF ONLY."

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NOW IS ONE OF THOSE
TIMES WHEN BOLTING LIKE
A GAZELLE WOULD BE
JUST THE
TICKET.



DEITY
IDENTIFICATION

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GOD: OURS

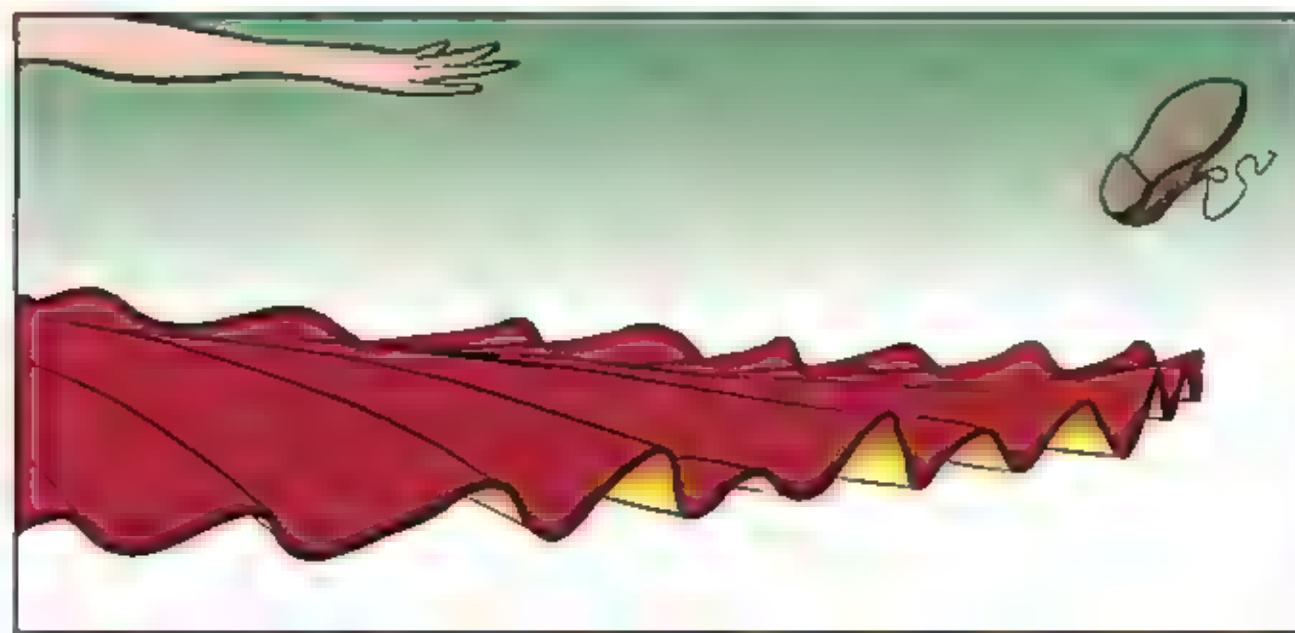
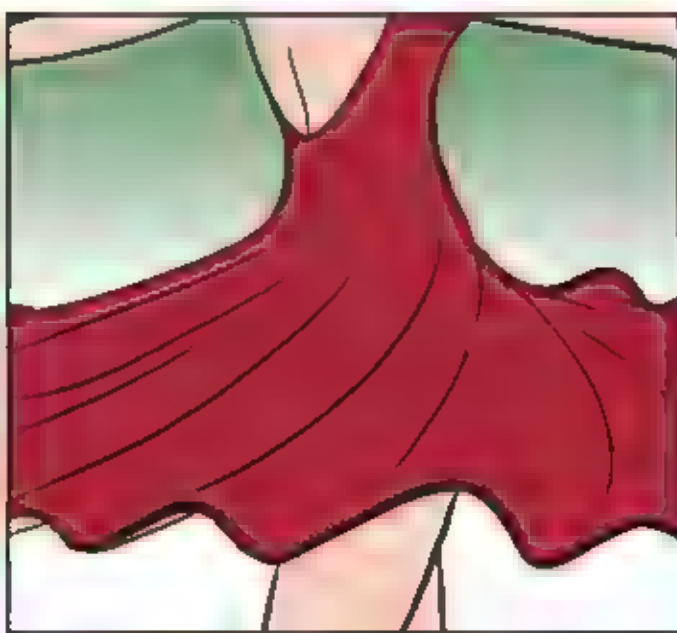
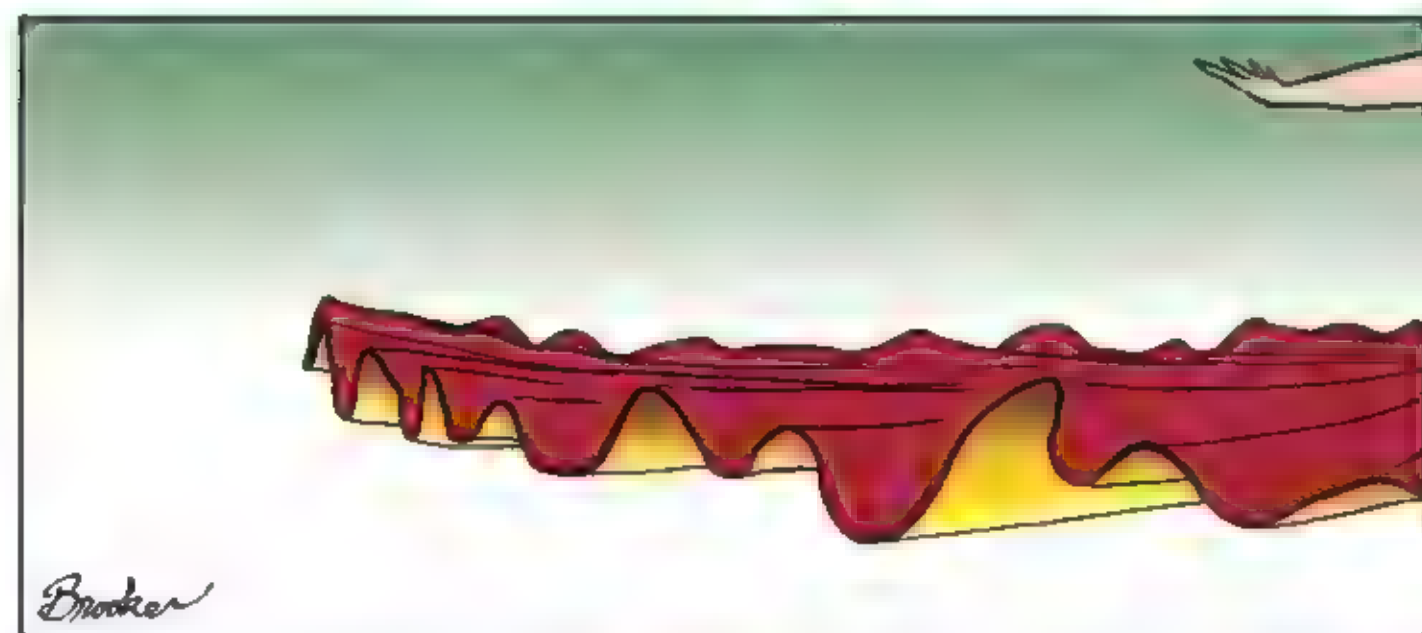
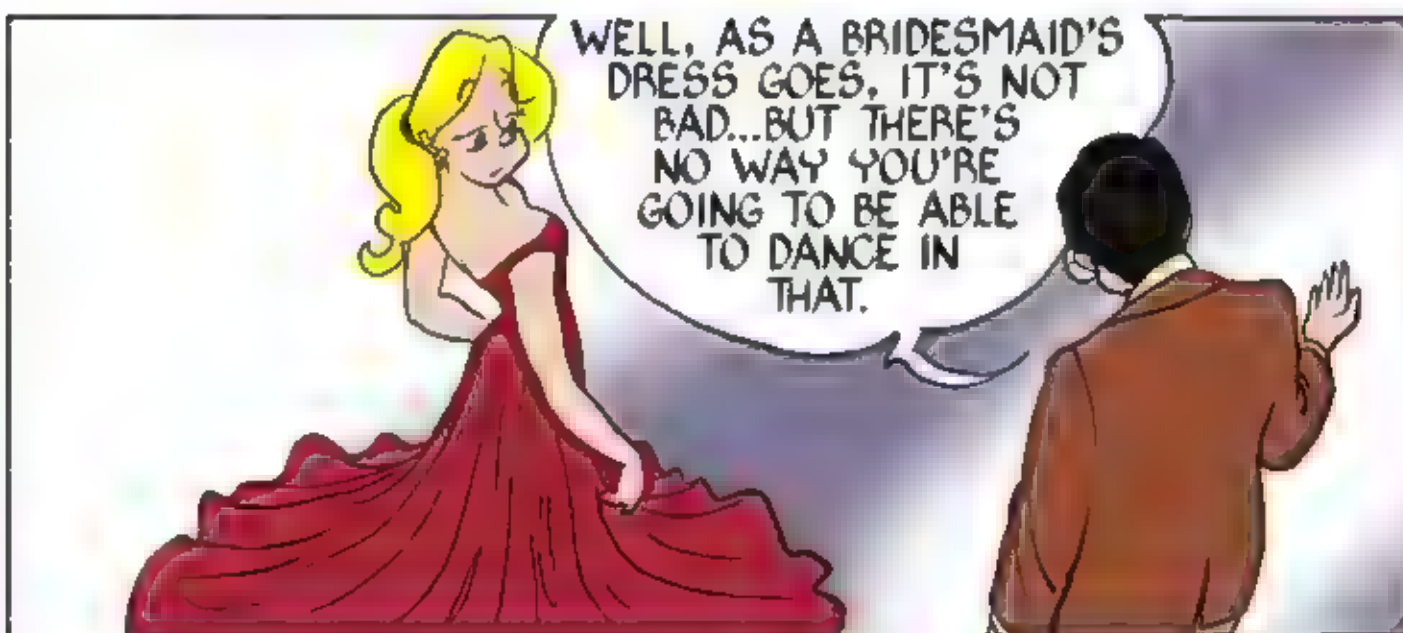
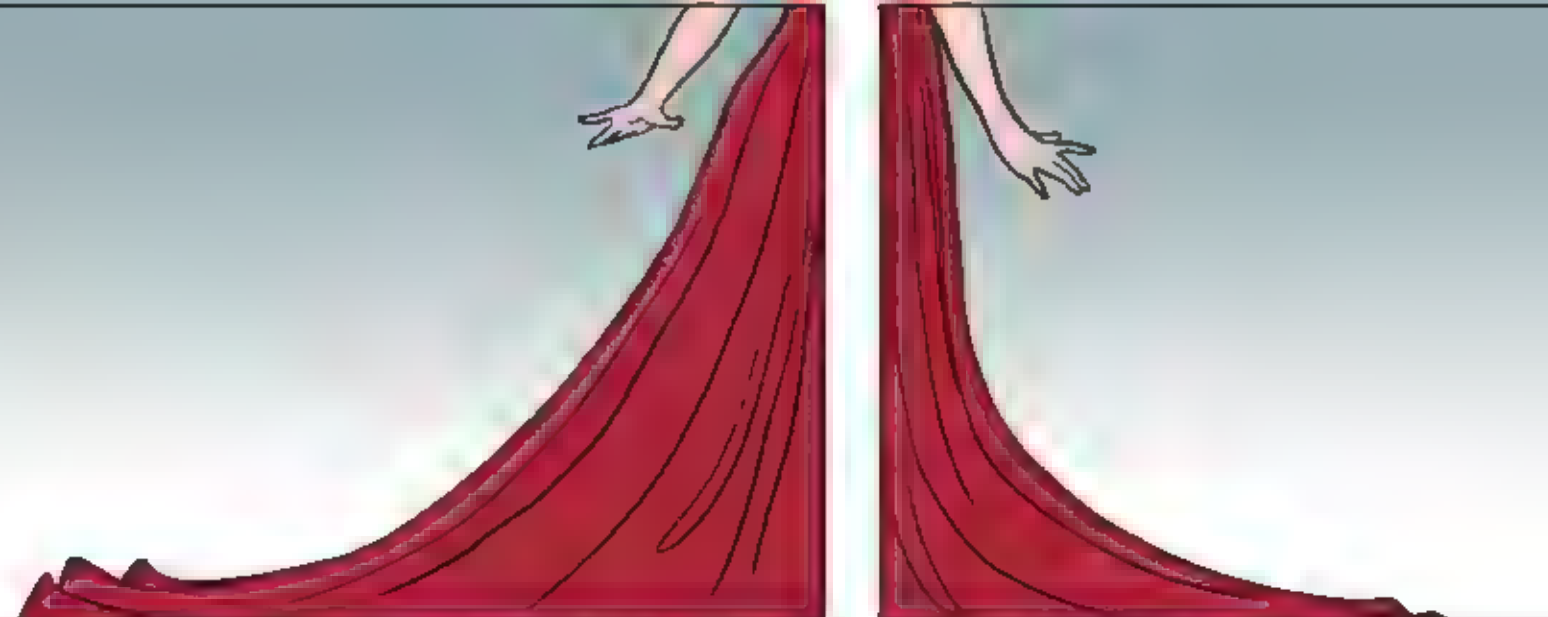


A GOD: THEIRS

Brooks

9 CHICKWEED LANE

®



AS MUCH AS I HATE TO SAY
SO, YOU'RE NOT GAY...AND I
CAN PROVE IT: IMAGINE ME
IN MY BIKINI SWIM-
SUIT WITH THE
GREEN
CAR-
NATION
PRINT.

OKAY.

NOW IMAGINE EDDA IN THAT
REALLY SLINKY DRESS
I BOUGHT HER FOR THE
NEW YEAR'S COTILLION.

Brooke

MY KNEES...
...THEY GAVE
OUT.

YOU'RE
STRAIGHT.

HOLD ON,
I'M STILL
STUCK BACK
ON THE SWIM-
SUIT.

I'M SORRY I BOLTED LIKE
A FRIGHTENED JACKRABBIT
WHEN THAT WOMAN
THOUGHT WE
WERE
MARRIED.

NO
APOLOGIES
NECESSARY.



LIKE A TERRIFIED DEER,
A FLEEING GAZELLE,
A FLUSHED GROUSE,
A STAMPEDING...



Brooke



WHAT
WAS
THAT?

I'D CALL
IT A
SPEEDING
BULLET.



YOU MADE AMOS FLEE
IN TERROR JUST BY GIVING
HIM A LOOK?



NOT ANY LOOK...I USED
YOUR COPYRIGHT BASILISK-
STARE-EYE-OF-PURE-EVIL-
FLESH-CORRODING-
BOWELS-OF-
HELL-WITCH
WHAMMY.



Brooke



I PREFER TO CALL IT A
LOOK OF RIGHTEOUS
INDIGNATION, BUT I GUESS
A "FLESH-
CORRODING
WITCH
WHAMMY"
WILL
DO.

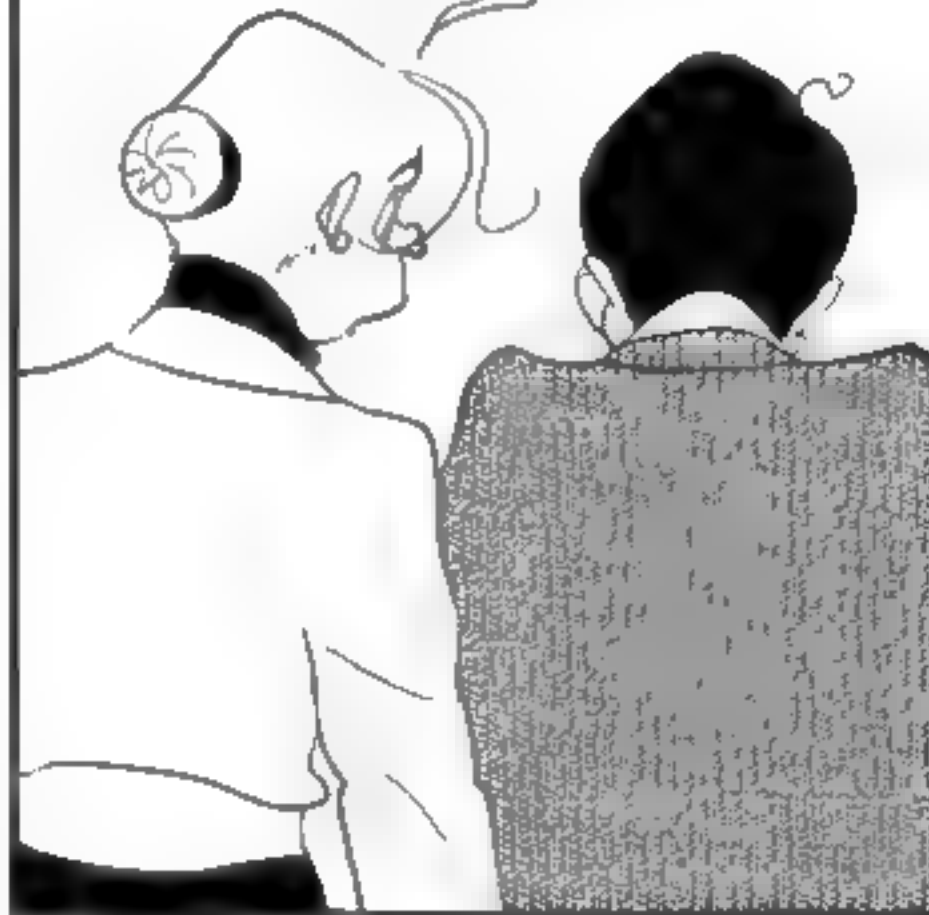


I'M JUST NOT READY TO
SEE MYSELF AS BETROTHED
YET. I WANT TO BE
A FREE AGENT, TO PLAY
THE FIELD, TO SOW
MY WILD OATS...



Barker

WHAT'S
WRONG?



I JUST MADE MYSELF
QUEASY.

BREATHE
INTO
THIS.



WOULD YOU JUST
HOLD ME STEADY
A BIT?

I ALWAYS
WILL.



MAYBE AS A FORMER NUN,
I HAVE TOO MANY FALSE
EXPECTATIONS REGARDING
COURTSHIP, BUT FRANCIS'
DATE CHAT RUNS A BIT
HEAVY ON THE QUOTES
ATTRIBUTED
TO ST.
THOMAS
AQUINAS.



IT'S TIME TO FILL
THE BREACH.



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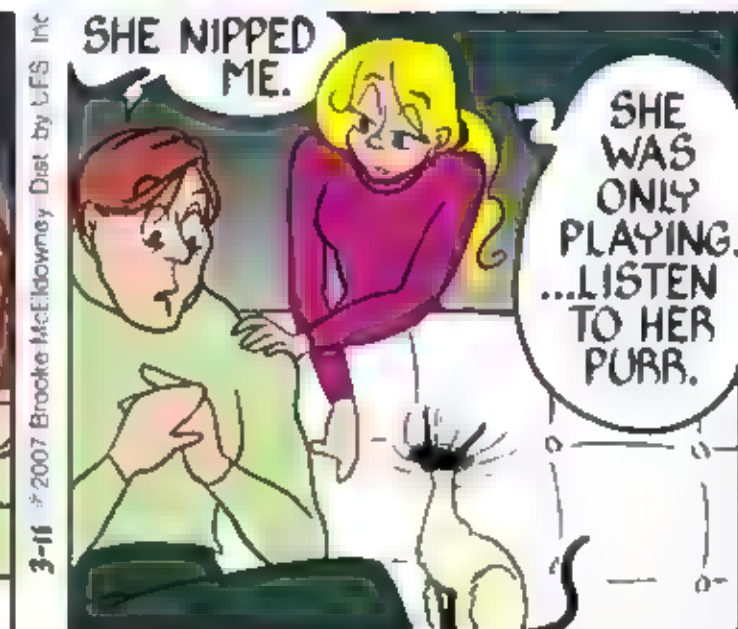
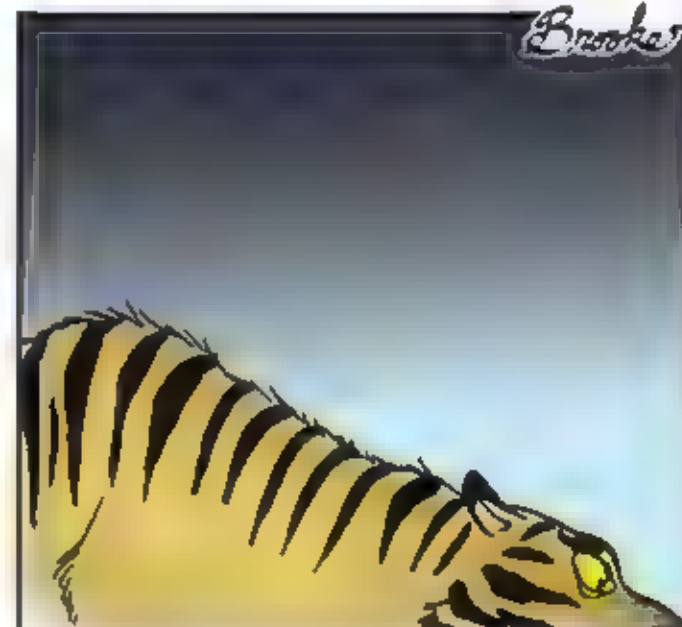
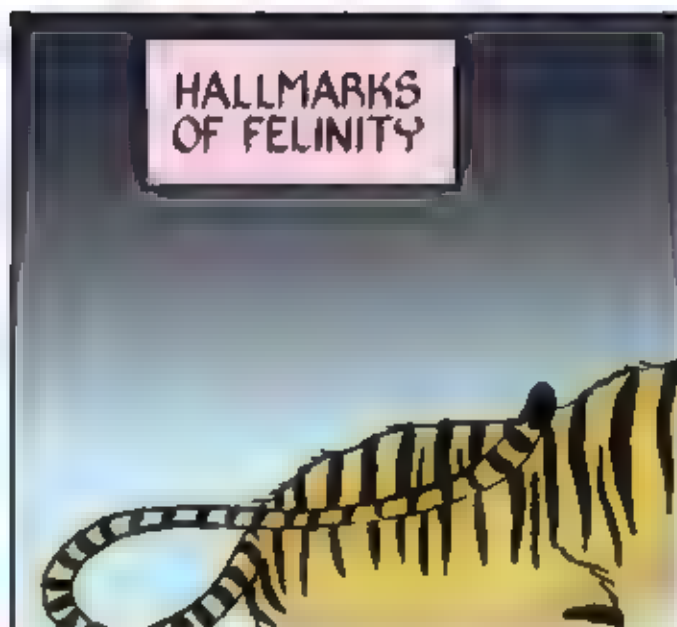
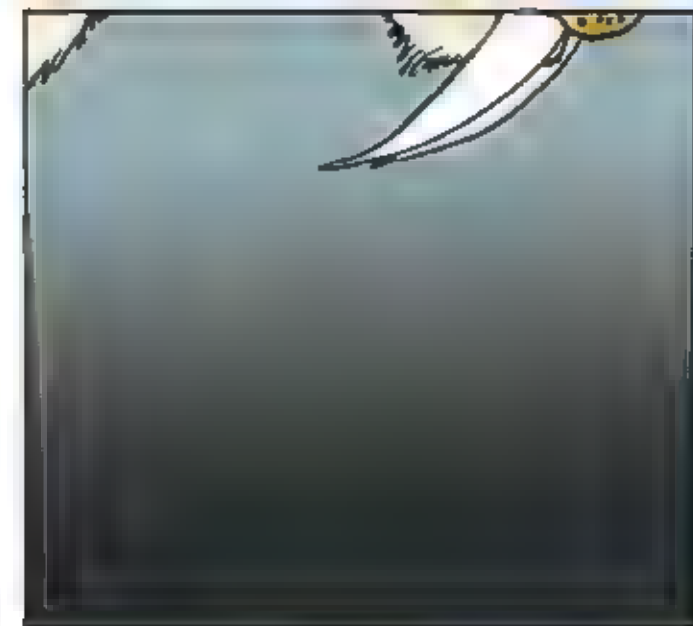
WOW...ST. THOMAS
AQUINAS CERTAINLY
GETS HER HOT.





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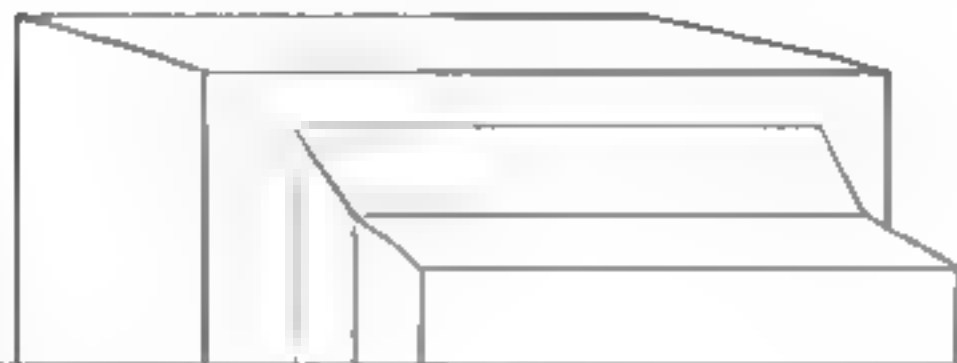


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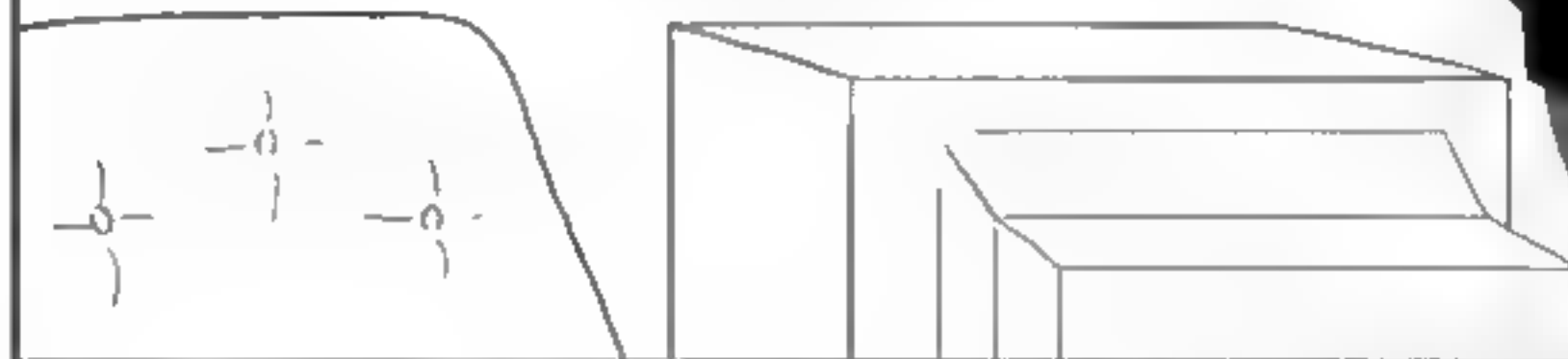
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MURDER AND
INCIVILITY:
ANTIPODES
ON THE
SPECTRUM
OF AFFRONTS
TO SOCIETY,
INCIVILITY BEING
THE MOST
HEINOUS.



ON EARTH, THE CRIME OF MURDER
IS UNIVERSALLY CELEBRATED,
A FASCINATING WELLSPRING OF
ENTERTAINMENT PROFITS THAT
CORRESPONDS IN DIRECT PROPORTION
TO THE FEROCITY OF THE MURDER.
TO DATE, THERE ARE VERY FEW,
IF ANY, TELEVISION PROGRAMS,
NOVELS, STORIES, PLAYS OR
FILMS ABOUT INCIVILITY.



Brooke

WHAT'S
WRONG?

MARK AND I HAD
ANOTHER FIGHT
ABOUT BECOMING
PARENTS.



OH, HE'LL
COME
AROUND.

I DON'T THINK
SO...MARK
DREAMS
CHILDREN.
...AND MORE
THAN ANY-
THING, I WANT
TO HAVE
THEM...
...KIDS
OF MY
OWN.



BUT THAT'S
NOT AN
IMPOSSIBLE
HURDLE.



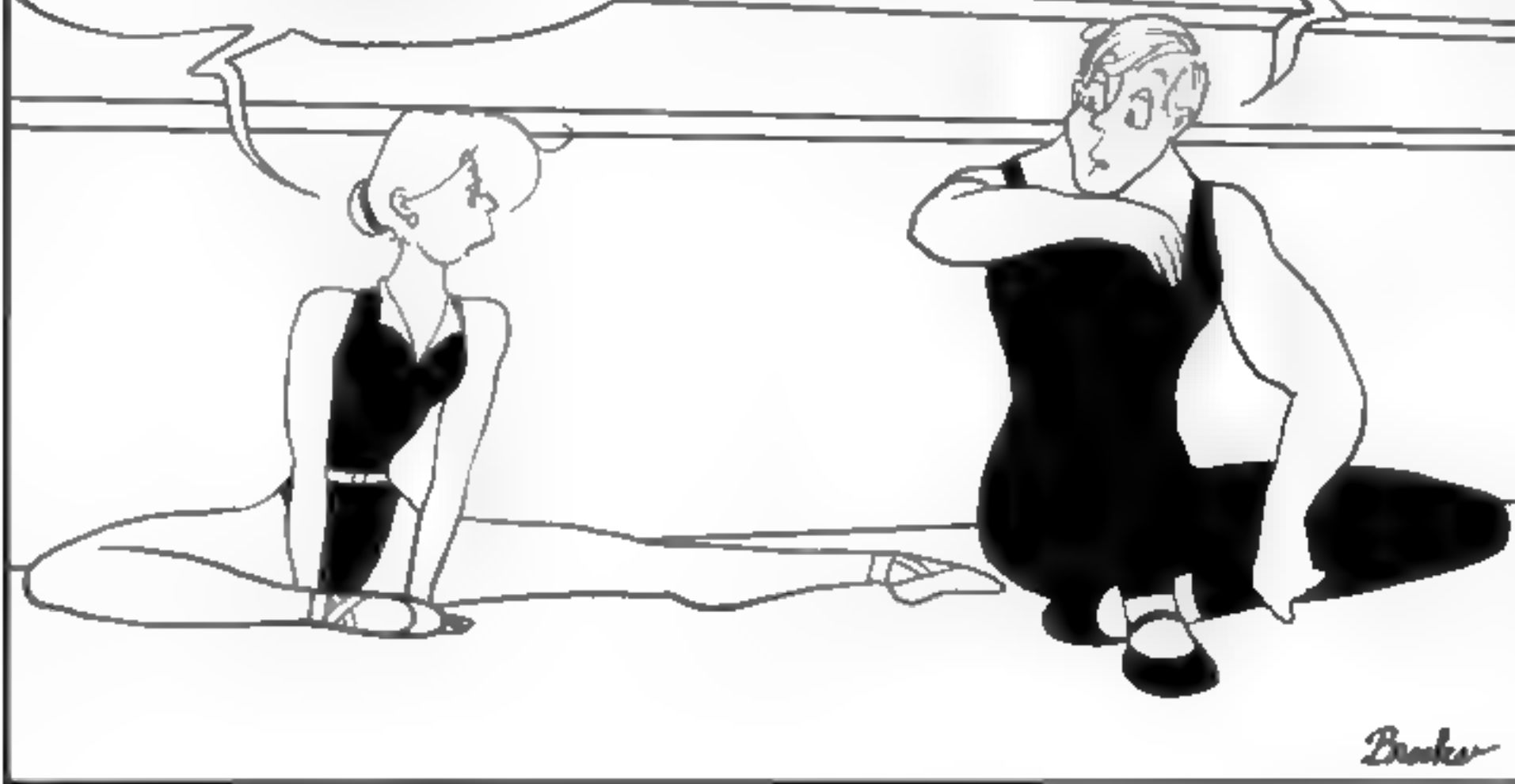
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...WITH
YOU.

YOU REALLY WANT ME
TO BE THE MOTHER OF
YOUR CHILDREN?

WELL...NO...TO CONTRIBUTE
YOUR CHROMOSOMES.



THEN I'D CONTRIBUTE
MY CHROMOSOMES,
RAISE THE CHILD,
SEND IT TO
COLLEGE...

HOLD
ON..



I'M STILL LINGERING ON THE
PART WHERE WE
"CONTRIBUTE"
OUR
CHROMOSOMES.

THOSE
QUOTATION
MARKS WERE
UTTERLY
VULGAR.



THE PROCESS, AS I READ IT,
INVOLVES YOUR DONATING
A FEW OVA WHICH ARE
THEN CONVEYED IN A
STERILE PIPETTE TO
A PETRI DISH
WHERE THEY
ARE
COMBINED
WITH
MY...



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A PETRI DISH?...HOW DID A
PETRI DISH GET INVOLVED?
DID YOU BRING IT FLOWERS
AND WINE?...
...TURN ON SOFT,
BACKGROUND
MUSIC AND
BREATHE
ON ITS
NECK?



DID YOU
LURE IT WITH
SWEET TALK ABOUT
YOUR PIPETTE?

YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO MAKE
THIS EASY,
ARE YOU?

HONESTLY,
I'M TRYING.

YES,
YOU ARE.
...VERY.



BASICALLY, WHAT YOU'RE
TELLING ME IS THAT UNDER
CLINICAL CONDITIONS, WITH
PETRI DISHES,
SURROGATES,
MEDICAL
PERSONNEL
AND
LAWYERS,
IN NINE
MONTHS
I'D BECOME
SOMEBODY'S
MOM.



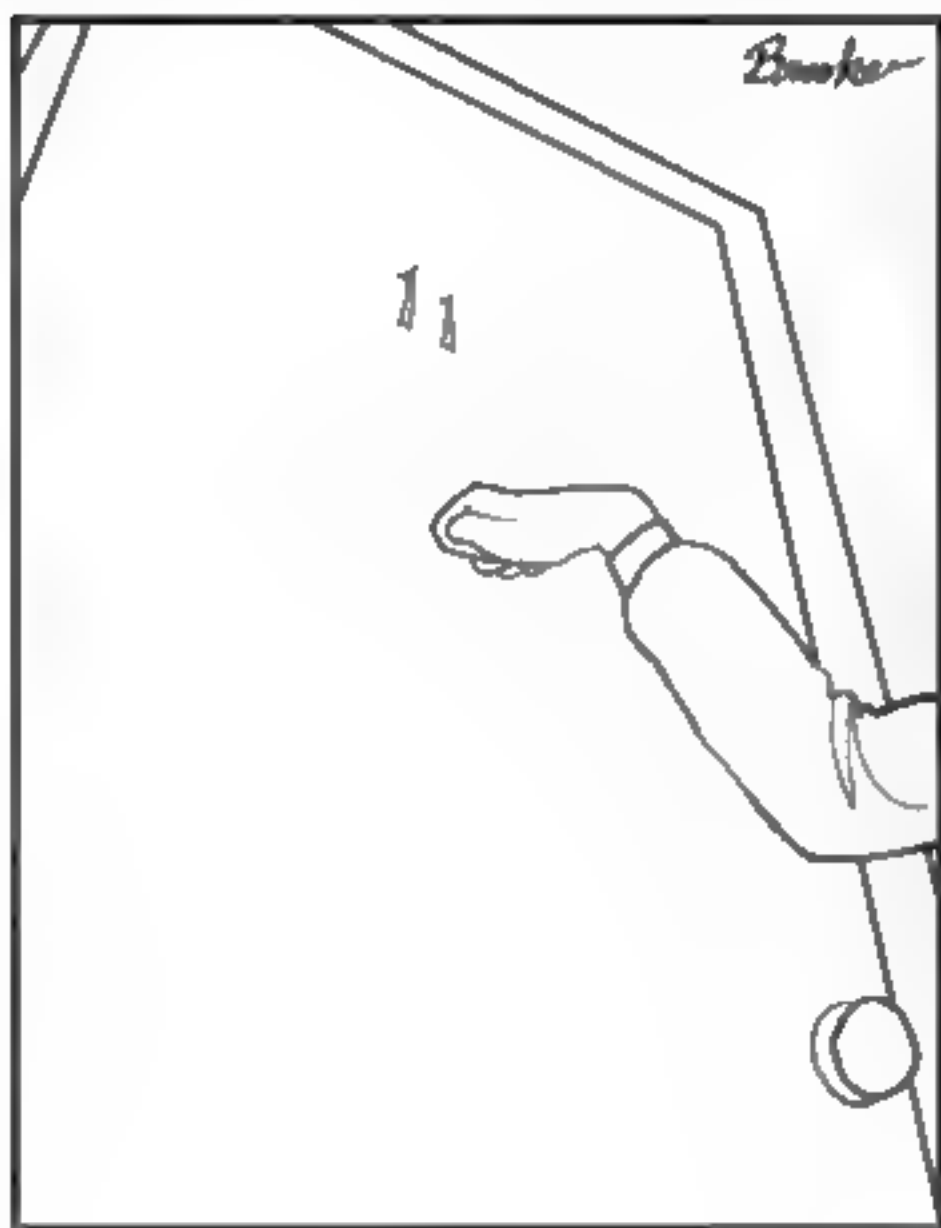
WELL...NO...
...IT'S NOT LIKE
THAT AT ALL...
...IT WOULD
INVOLVE...
...THE
IDEA
IS...
...ONLY
YOUR
CHROMO-
SOMES
WOULD BE
USED TO...



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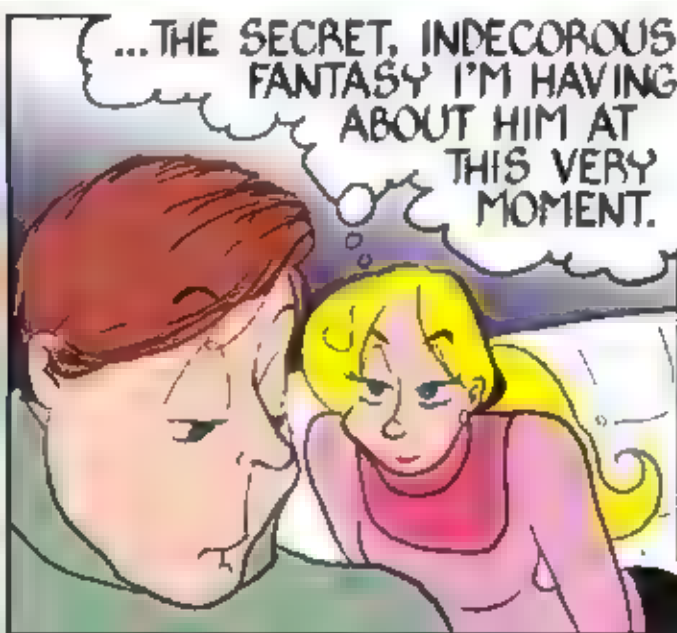
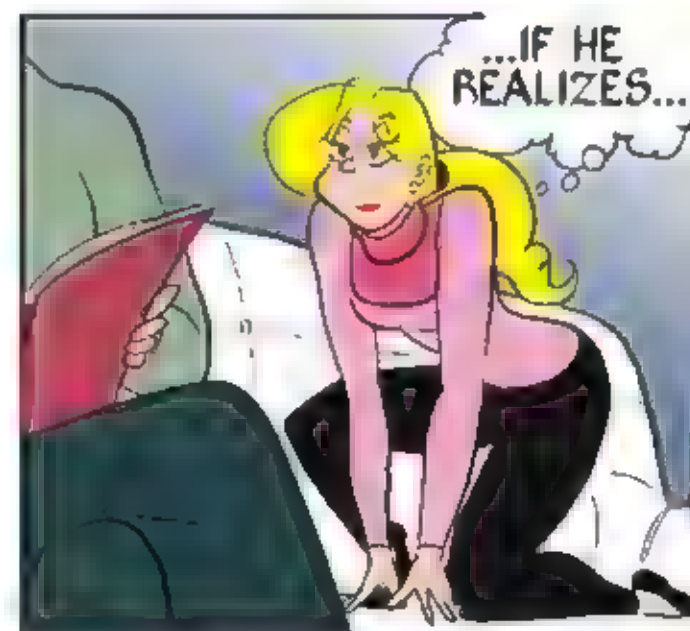
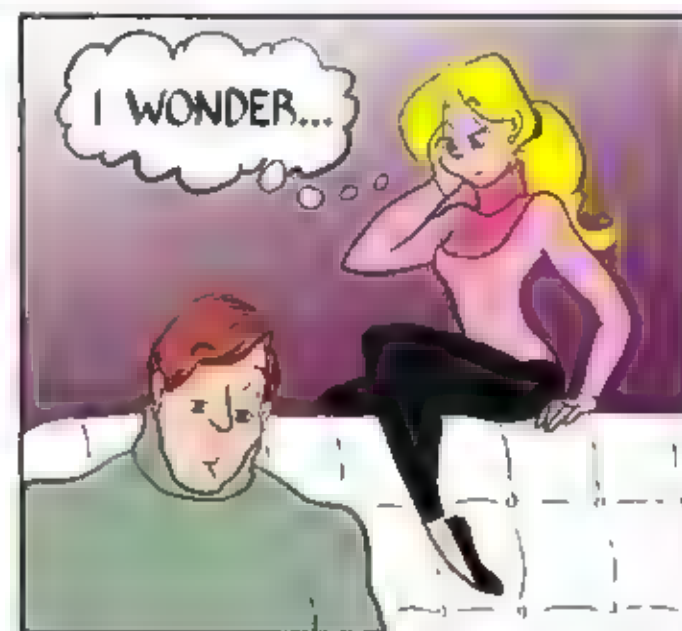
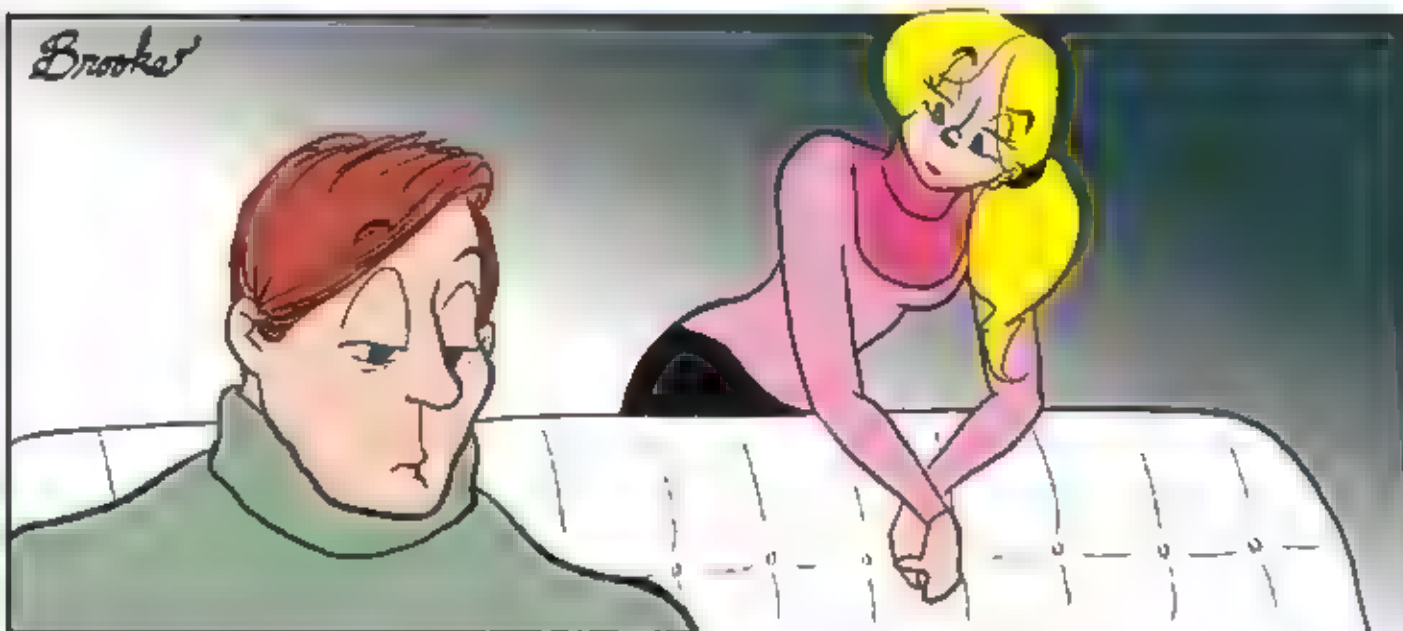
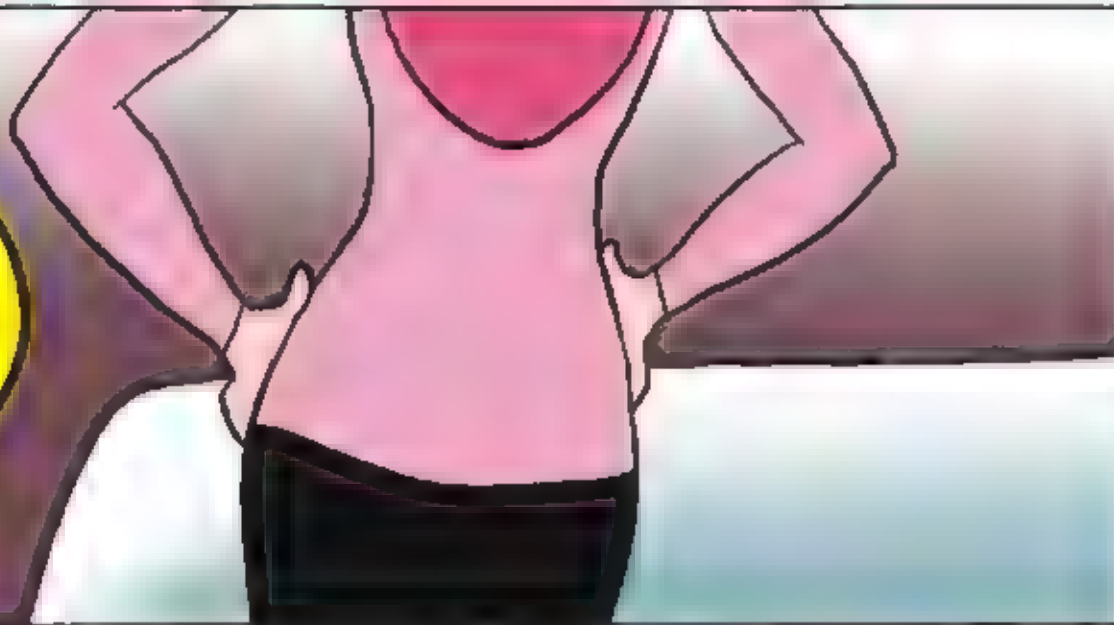


YES, YOU'D
BE SOMEBODY'S
MOM.



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9 CHICKWEED LANE



SETH
WANTED
THE USE
OF YOUR...
CHROMO-
SOMES?

AT SOME FUTURE
DATE AS YET TO
BE DETERMINED.
HE HAS TO GET
MARK ON
BOARD
FIRST.



Brake

THAT MIGHT TAKE AWHILE.
MARK NEVER STRUCK
ME AS A GREAT
FAN OF
CHILD-
HOOD.

HE
CONSIDERS
IT A SCOURGE
AGAINST PEACEFUL
WALKS, FINE DINING
AND
AN UNRE-
STRAINED
INDULG-
ENCE IN
VERBAL
OBSCEN-
ITY.



AND...
...UM...
...WHAT
WAS
YOUR
ANSWER?



AH...HIS HAIR
WRITHES FROM
ITS BONDS...
...CURIOSITY AND
POSSESSIVE-
NESS
MASQUER-
ADE AS
DETACHED
CONVER-
SATION...

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...AND
HOW DID
HE PROPOSE
TO...ACHIEVE
THIS
COMMINGLING
OF CHROMO-
SOMES?



JEALOUSY!...
...THE
MOTHERLODE!

YOU'RE JUST JERKING MY
CHAIN, AREN'T YOU? SETH
DOESN'T REALLY WANT
YOU TO MOTHER HIS CHILD.

YOU'RE DELIBERATELY
RATTLING MY CAGE...
...SHIVERING MY
TIMBERS...

...TOSSING STONES IN MY
POND...STIRRING UP THE
SEDIMENT...SHAKING MY
TREE...

I'M JUST WAITING FOR
THE METAPHOR WELL
TO RUN DRY.

...KNOTTING
MY SHOE-
LACES...

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Brooks



SO...IT OCCURS TO ME THAT
YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOUR
ANSWER...

...TO
SETH.

ABOUT
WHAT?



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YOUR
CHROMOSOMES.

OH...
...THAT.



WHEN HE ASKED IF HE
COULD HARVEST A SET
OF YOURS.

OH...
...THAT.

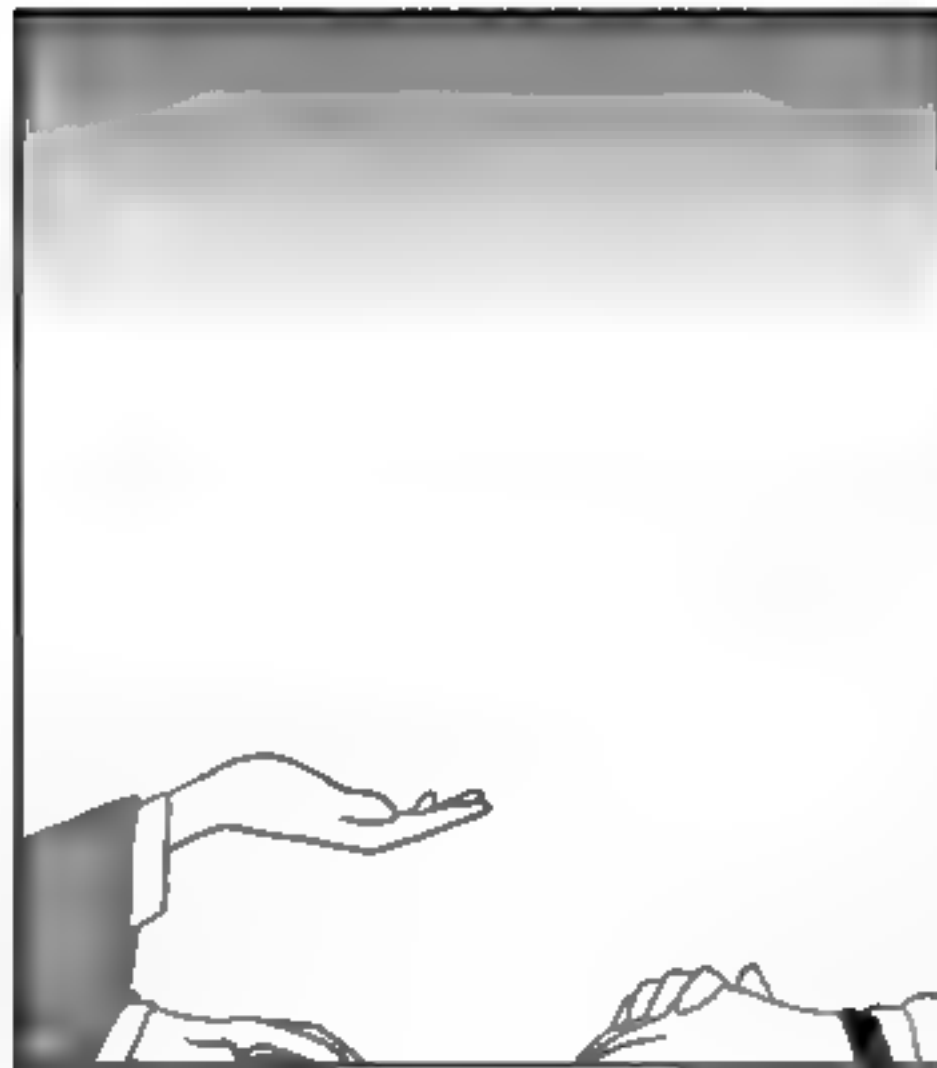


GIVING HIM FREE REIN AMID
BOLTS OF FORKED LIGHTNING
AND MANIACAL LAUGHTER
TO CREATE A HUMAN LIFE
IN HIS OWN IMAGE...LIKE
DR. FRANKENSTEIN.

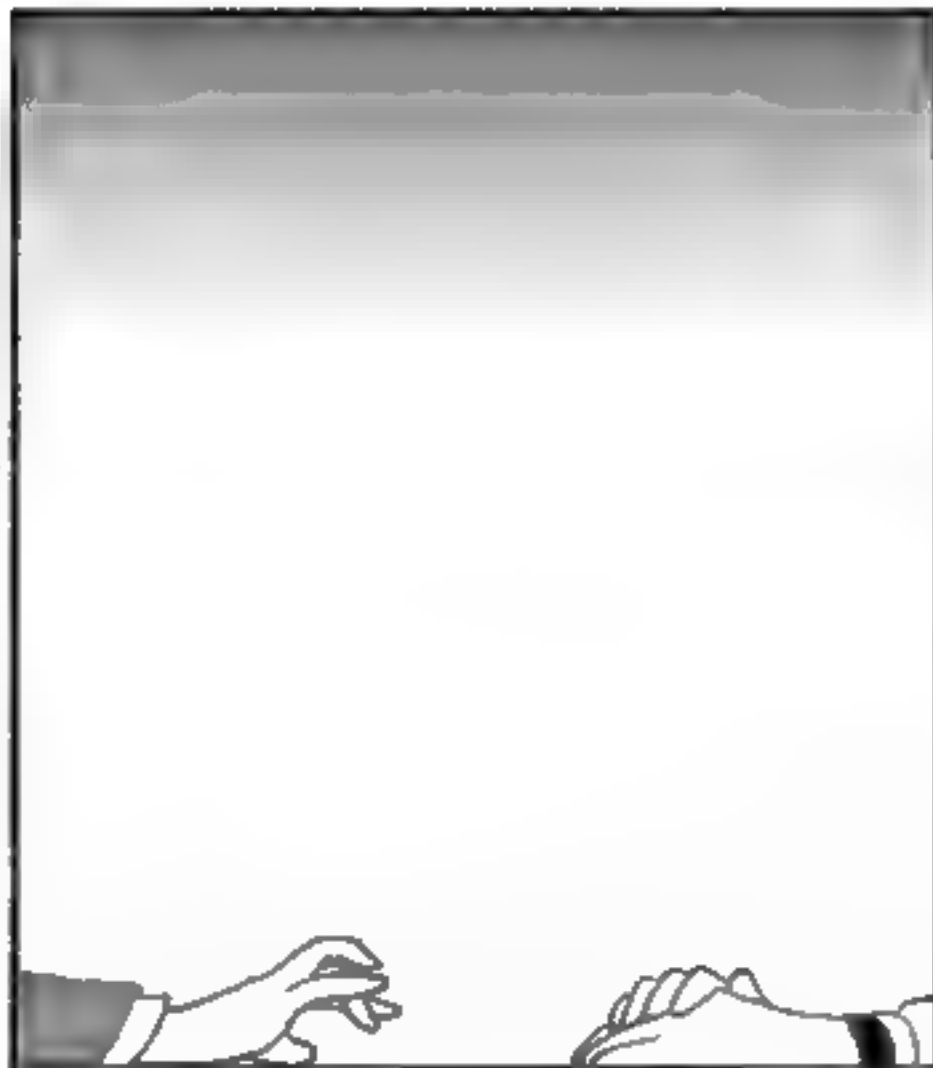
OH...
...THAT.



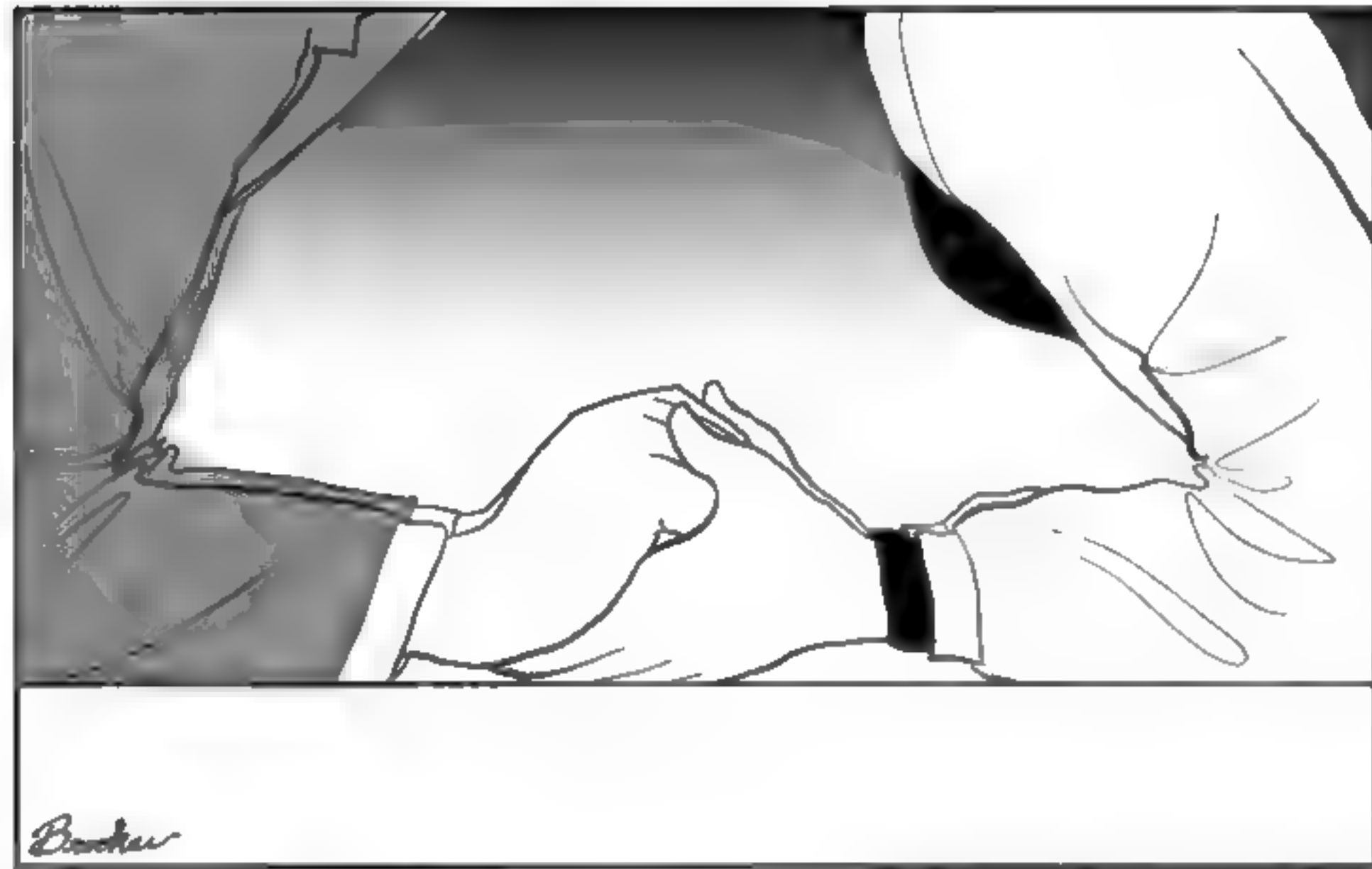
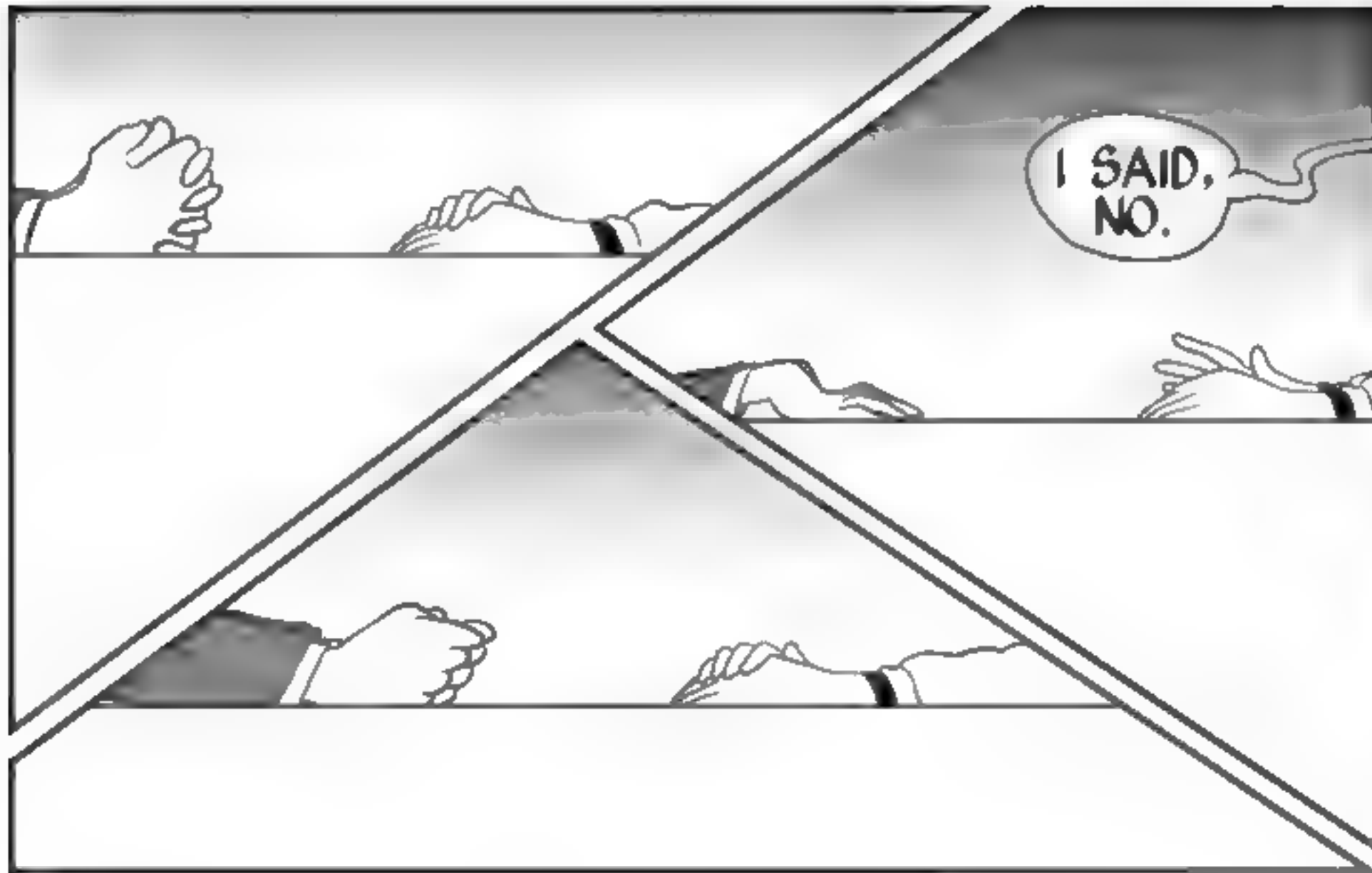
REALLY, WHEN I ASK WHAT
YOU SAID TO SETH ABOUT
PROVIDING GENETIC
MATERIAL, IT'S ONLY OUT
OF CURIOSITY. NATURALLY,
THAT IS AN ISSUE STRICTLY
BETWEEN YOU AND THE
FUTURE FATHER OF YOUR
CHILDREN.

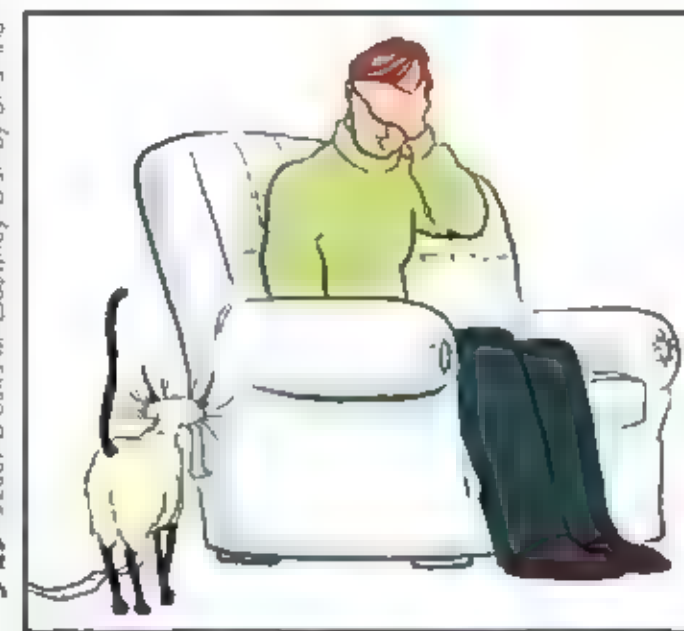
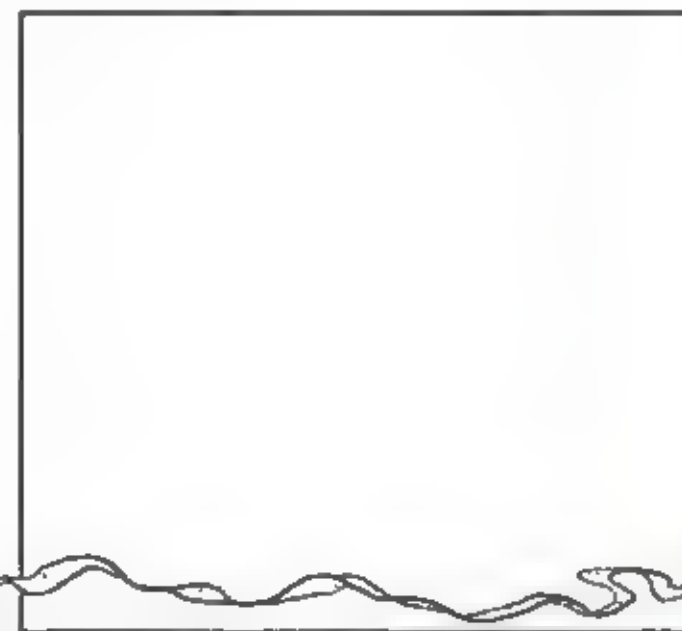
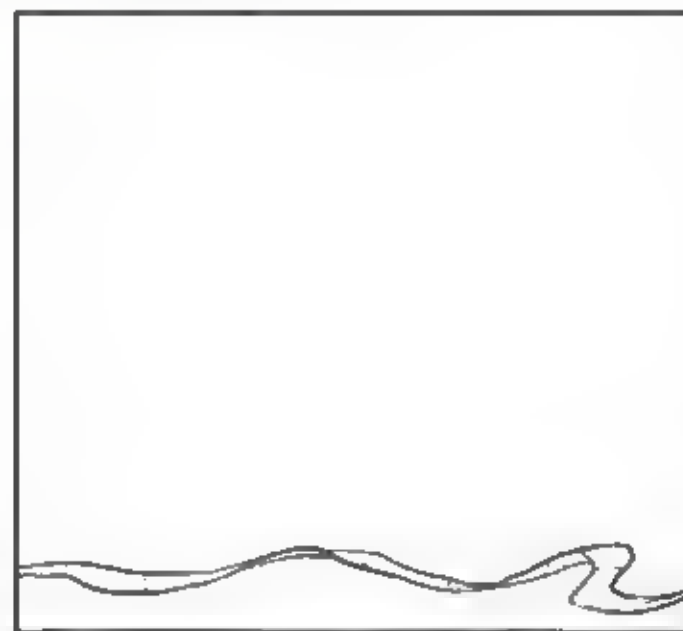
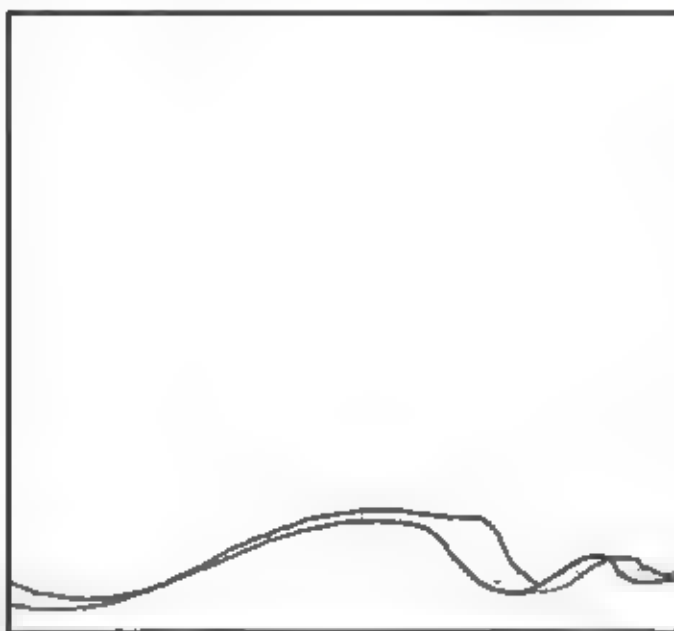
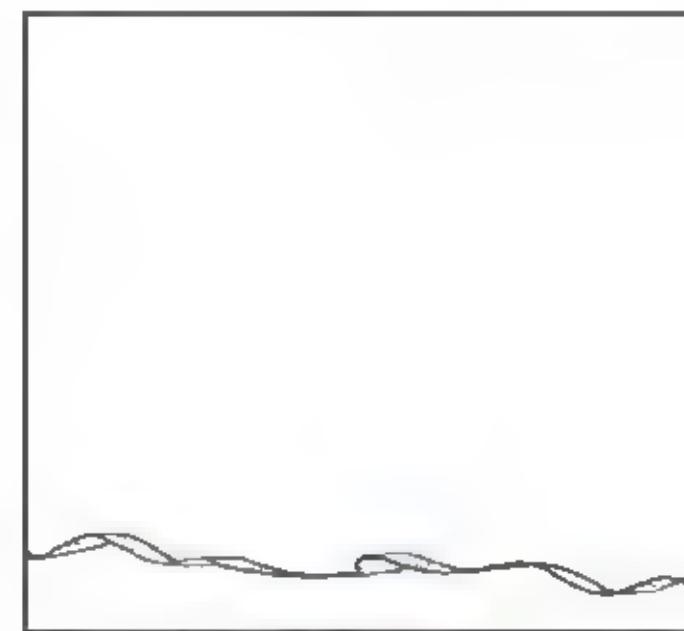
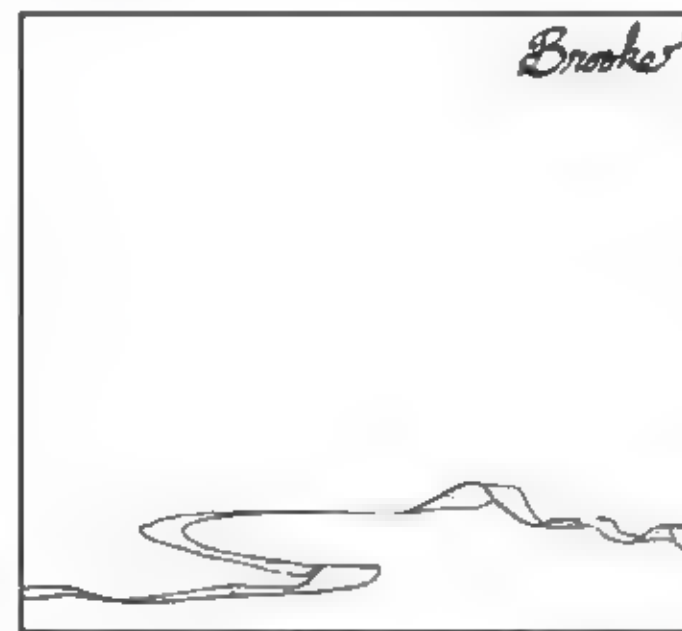
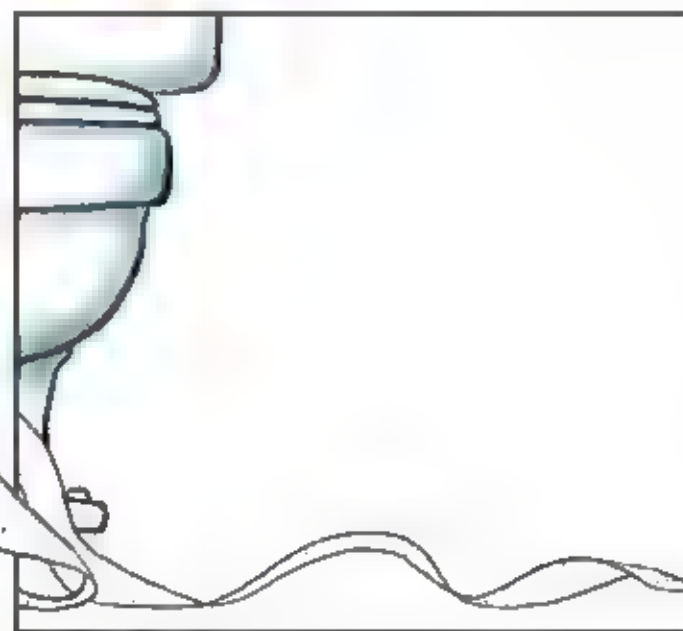
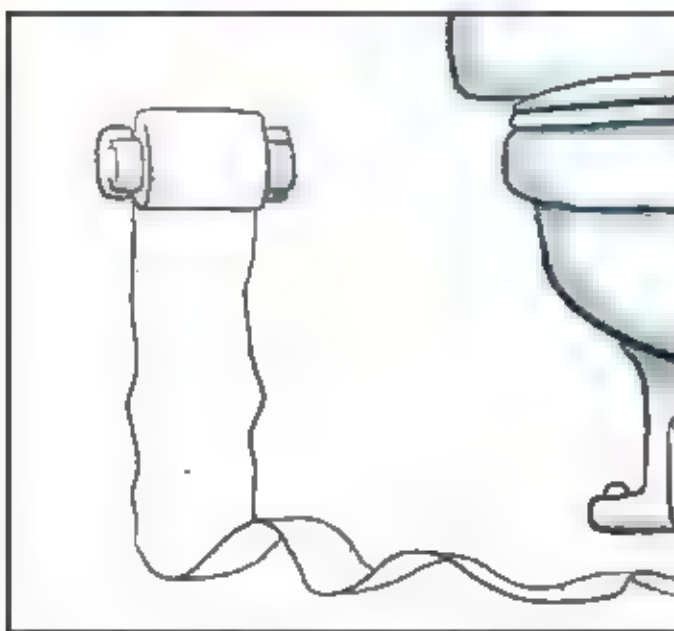


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Bender





YOU'RE
HOME
A MITE
LATE.

DURING MY WALK BACK,
I ENCOUNTERED 5 PEOPLE WHO
REQUIRED IMMEDIATE DAMNATION
IN TOPHET FOR BEING OBNOXIOUS
SCUM, AND I PUT A CURSE ON
42 OTHERS JUST
FOR BEING
UGLY.

Brooke

IT'S ME...FEEL LIKE
GOING OUT?

EDDA'S STREET-CLEANING.
I'D AVOID A FIVE-BLOCK
RADIUS OF 79TH AND
BROADWAY IF I WERE
YOU.

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WHAT'S THE FIRST THING
YOU THINK WHEN
YOU SEE ME
WEARING
FISHNET
STOCK-
INGS
LIKE
THESE?



Brooke

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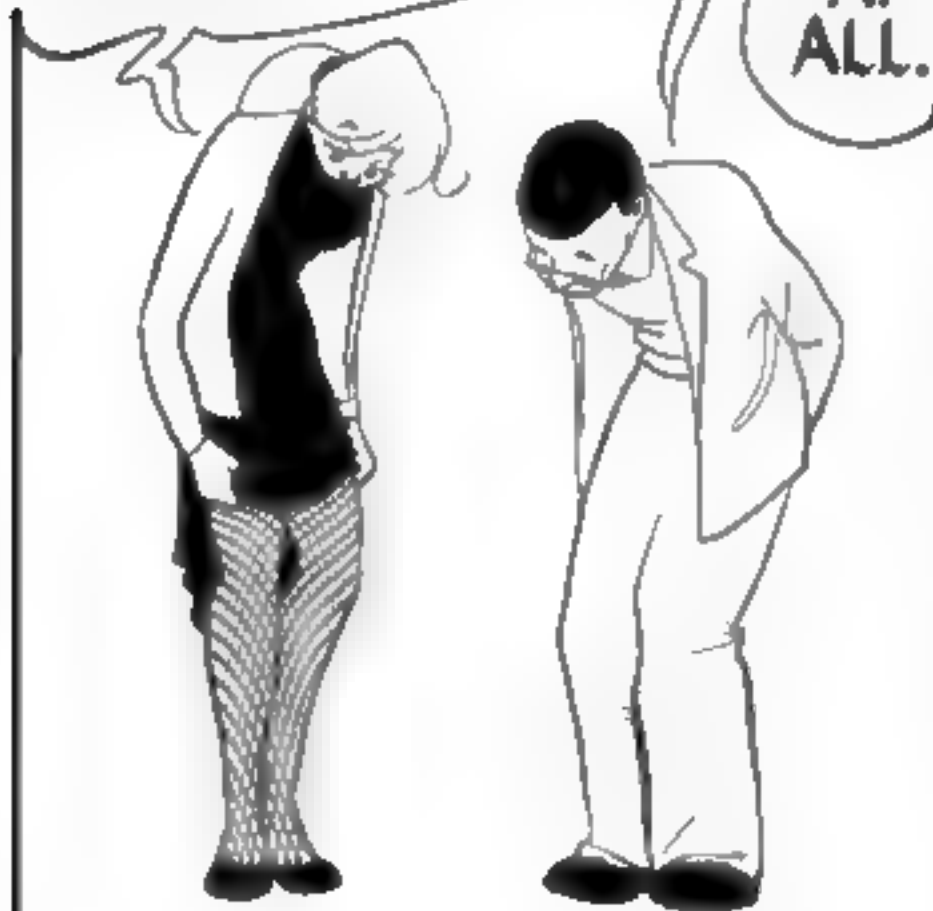


DYNAMITE
GAMS.

I LIKE A MAN
WHO CAREFULLY
CONSIDERS
HIS TESTIMONY.



DO YOU THINK THESE STOCKINGS MAKE ME LOOK A LITTLE CHEAP?



NO, NO, NOT AT ALL.

ARE YOU SURE? BE HONEST. ...EVEN SLIGHTLY LOUCHE? A MITE HARLOT-ISH?

NO...
...REALLY.



WELL, MAYBE A WEENSY BIT ABANDONED.

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SOMETIMES IT TAKES ME A MINUTE TO GET UP TO SPEED.

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WITH THE SOFT CENTER)

GOD:
PROPER NOUN.

A CITIZEN
OF THE SKY
WHO LOOKS
A GREAT DEAL LIKE
JOHANNES BRAHMS...



...BUT IS A FAR
INFERIOR COMPOSER.



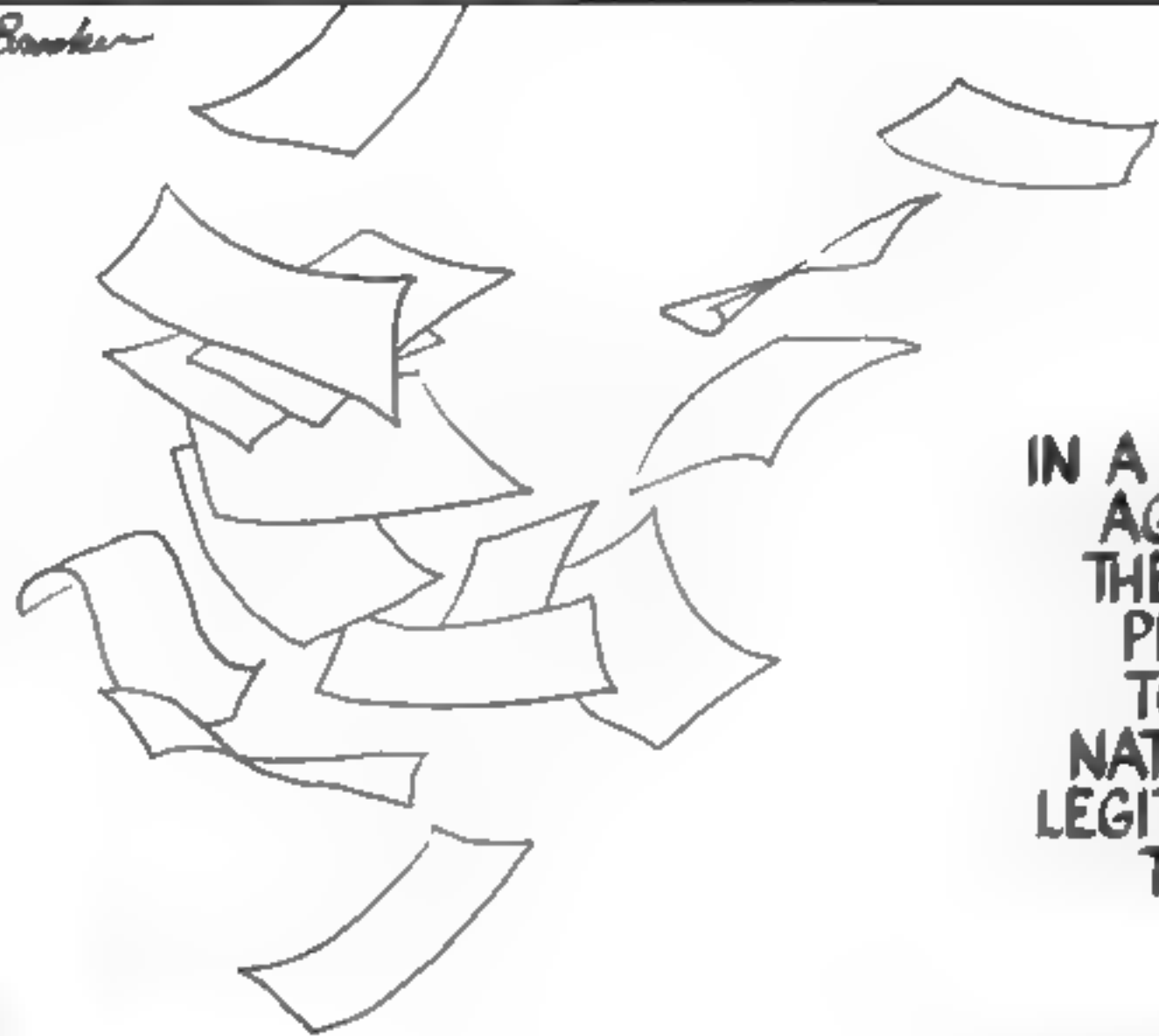
Barker

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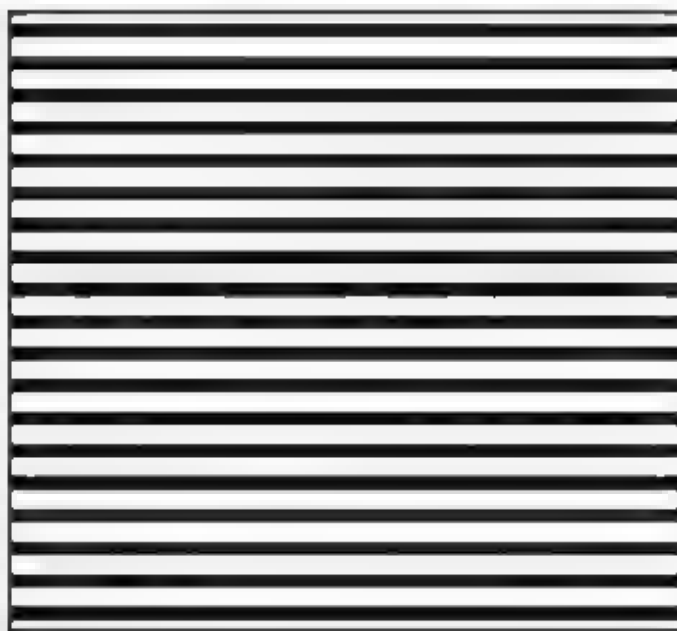
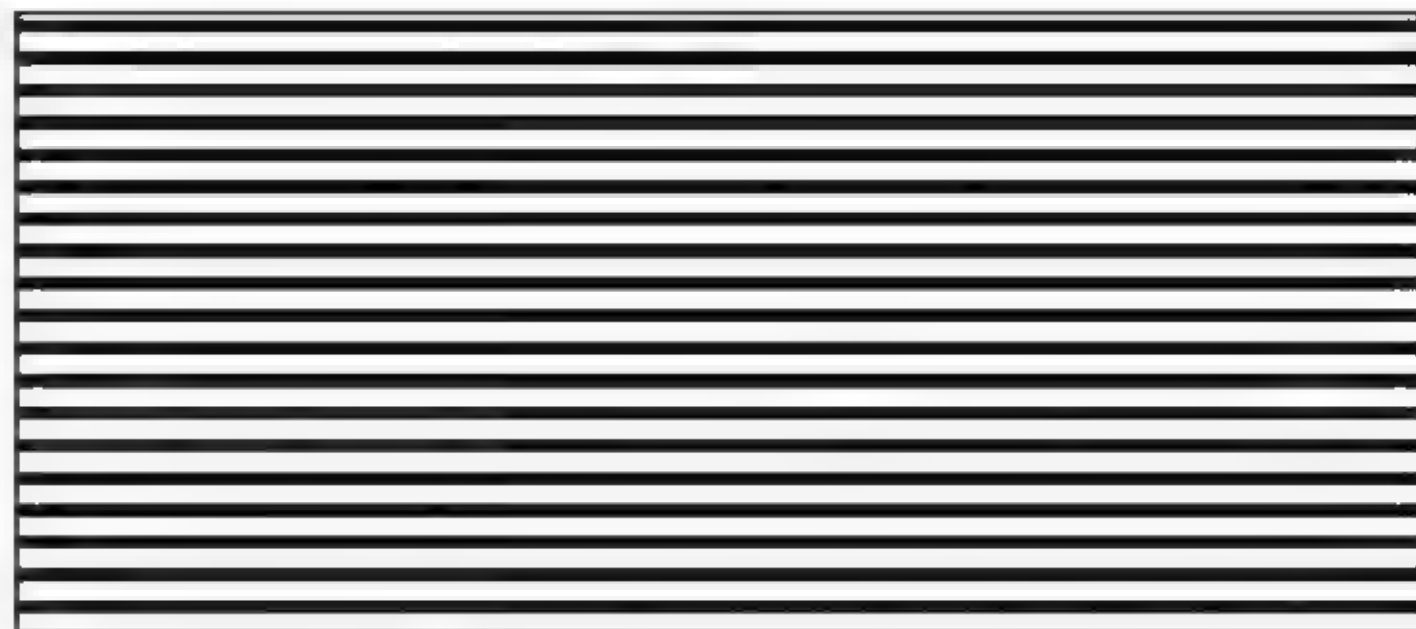
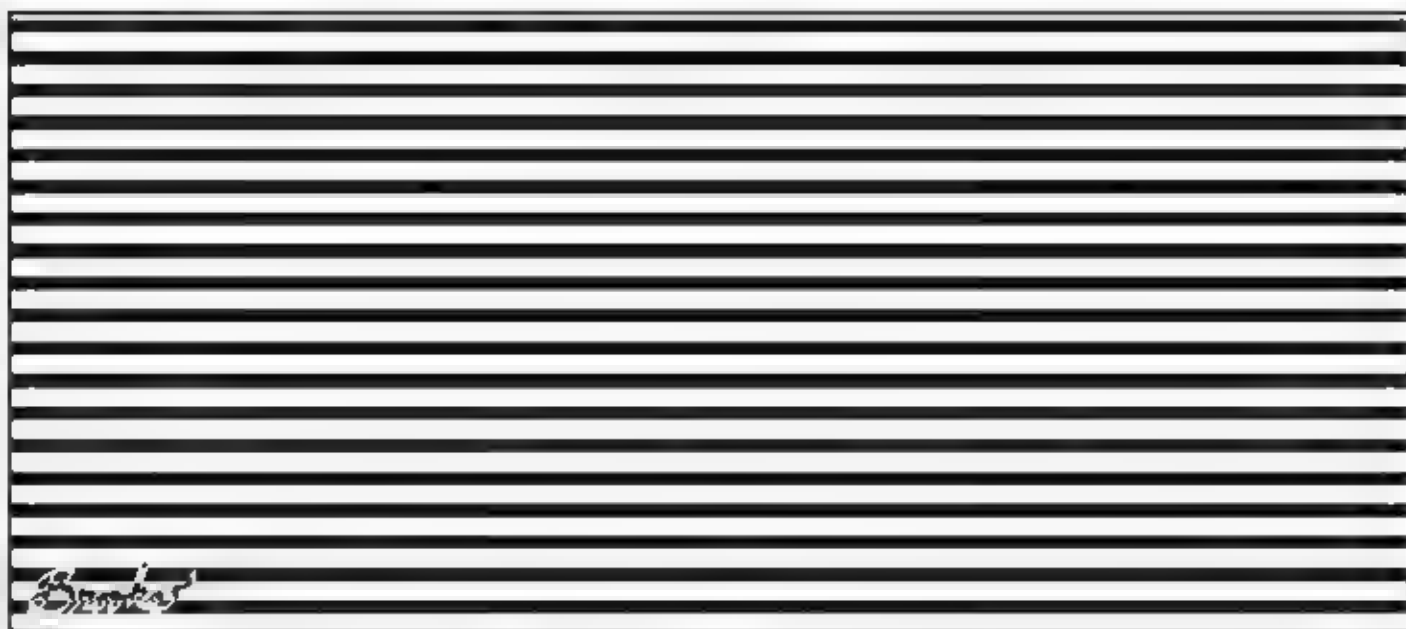
HATE:
NOUN.



Brooke



IN A PRENUPTIAL
AGREEMENT,
THE EMOTION
PRESUMED
TO BE THE
NATURAL AND
LEGITIMATE HEIR
TO LOVE.



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WITH THE SOFT CENTER)

HATE:
NOUN.



AT AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL,
THE CONVENTIONAL RESPONSE
TO ANY ACT OF GENEROSITY,
AFTER FIRST ACCEPTING
THE GENEROSITY.

Brooks

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(THE HARD LITTLE PLANET
WITH THE SOFT CENTER)

FAITH: NOUN.

THE
UNKNOWABLE
PROMOTED
TO THE
IRREFUTABLE

DOUBT
IN
EXILE



THE
CHILD'S
COMFORT



THE
FANATIC'S
TRIGGER

Barber

HOW OLD
WILL
YOU
BE ON
YOUR
NEXT
BIRTH-
DAY?

AT THAT
MOMENT,
I'LL
BECOME
"A
WOMAN
OF A
CERTAIN
AGE."



OH.



Broken



YOU JUST GOT
TEN TIMES
SEXIER.

IT'S
A
CURSE.



ALL READY TO GO?...HERE'S
YOUR COAT. THE FUNNIEST
THING HAPPENED IN
REHEARSAL
TODAY...



45
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HOLD ON...I NEED YOU
TO STOP TALKING
AND OBJECTIFY
ME FOR A
MOMENT.



....OH, WOW!
THAT'S ONE
INCENDIARY
DRESS!



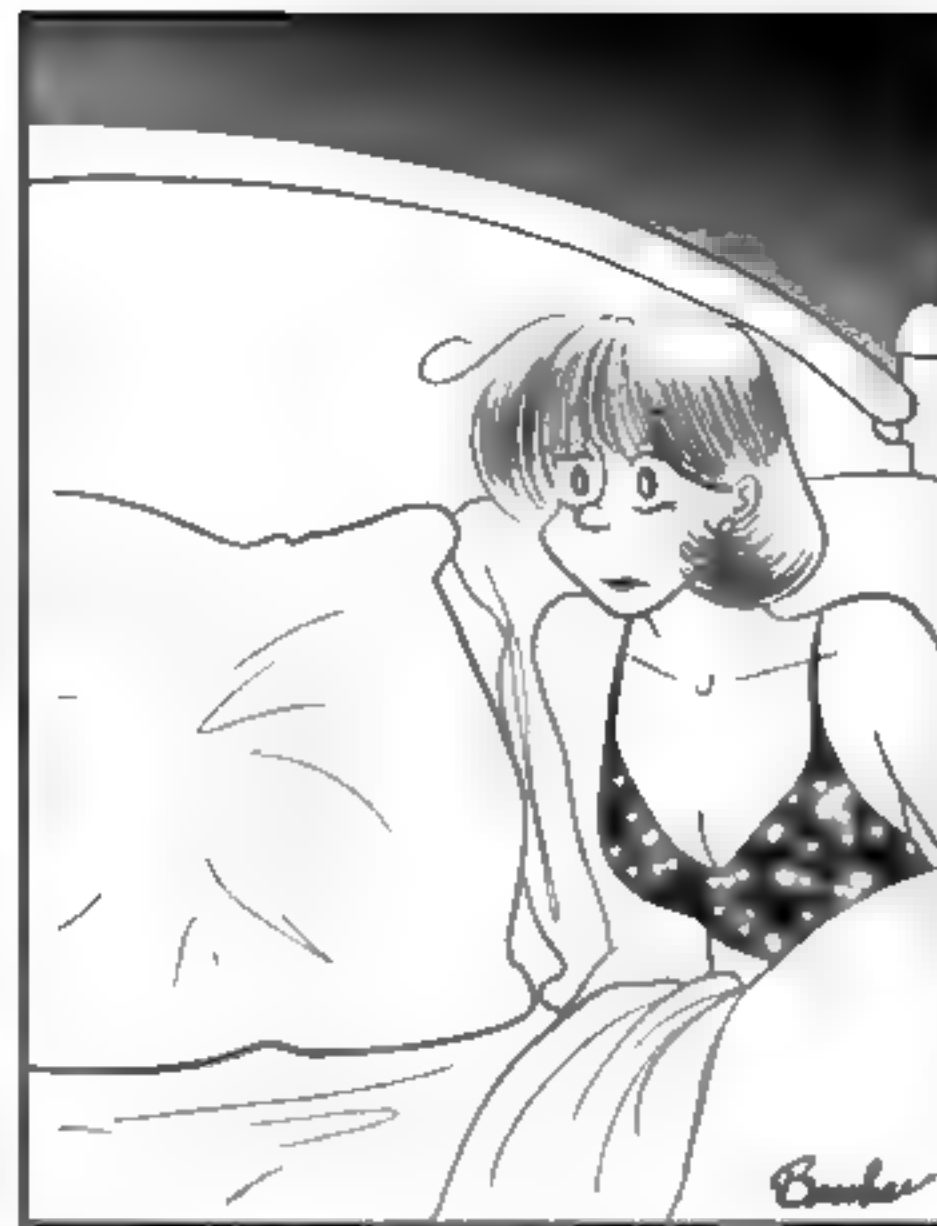
THANK YOU.
YOU MAY
NOW
RETURN
TO YOUR
STORY.

SO SOME-
BODY IN THE
SECOND VIOLINS
SNEEZED
AND...



UM...WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?

SLOWLY LICKING MY UPPER
LIP WITH MY TONGUE TIP,
WHILST I STARE AT YOU
WITH HEAVY-LIDDED,
SMOLDERING
EYES.



I JUST NEEDED MY READING
GLASSES...COULD
YOU DO THAT
AGAIN?

SEXINESS
SOMETIMES
DEMANDS MORE
THAN A MEASURE
OF PATIENCE.



ON MY PLANET, PEOPLE
ARE NAMED FOR THEIR
PROFESSIONS...FOR
INSTANCE, YOU WOULD
BE CALLED
"LADY
VET."



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DON'T YOU HAVE
SOMEWHERE TO GO?...
...SMALL CHILDREN TO
FRIGHTEN?



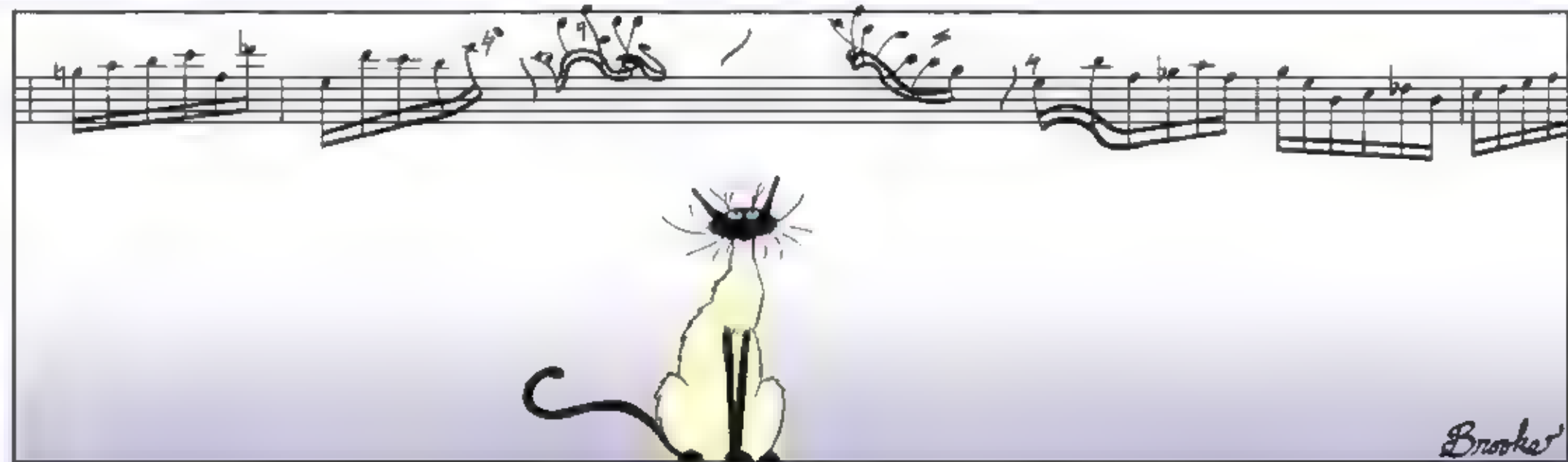
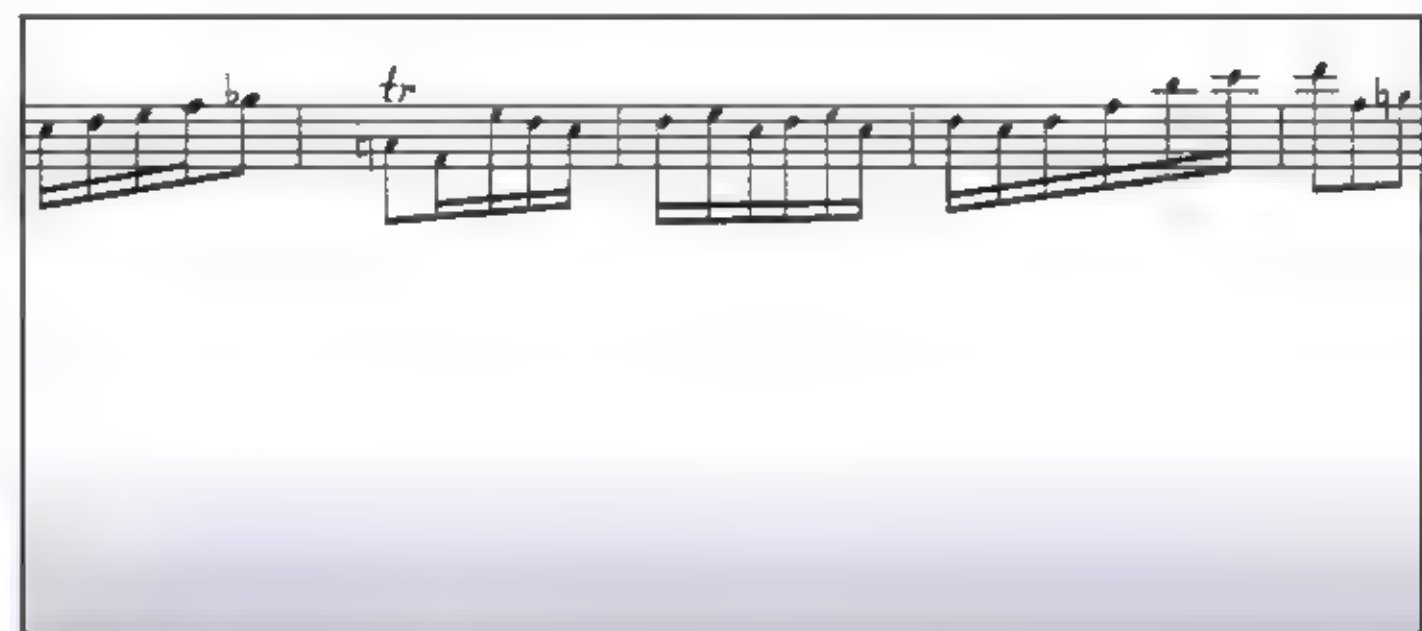
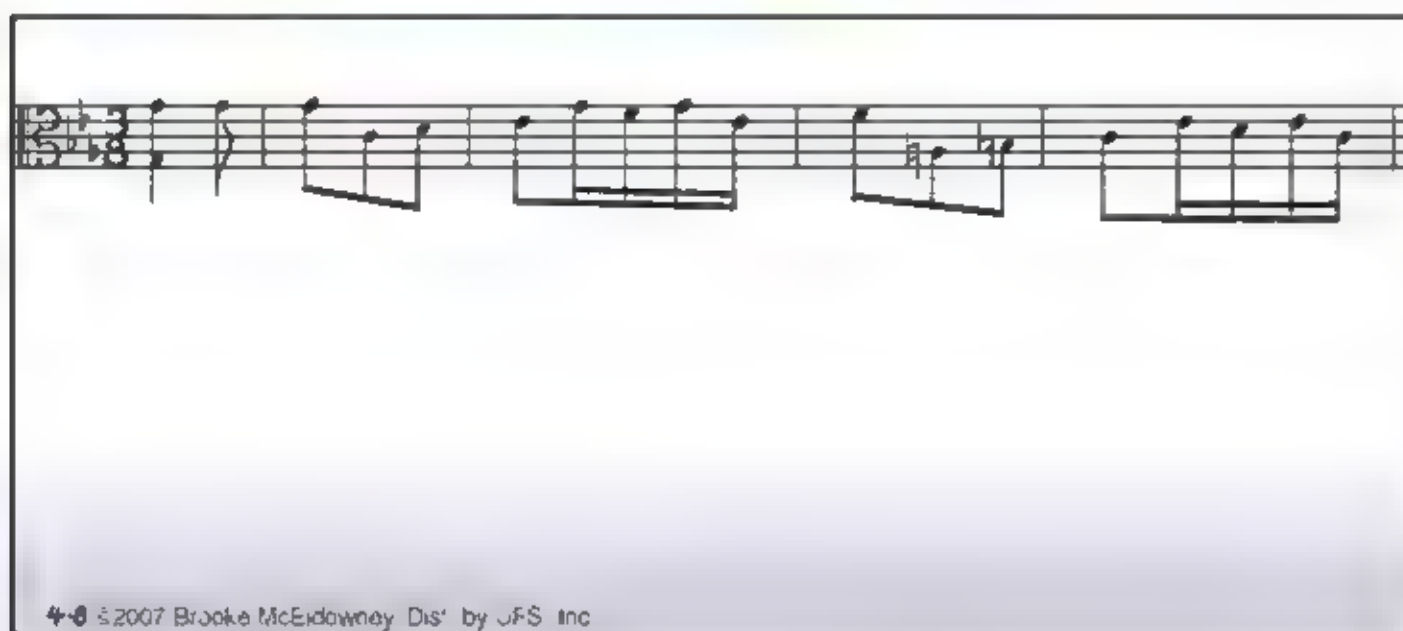
ROUGHLY TRANSLATED,
MY NAME MEANS
"CERTIFIED PUBLIC
ACCOUNTANT."



OR IS IT
"ENEMA"?

WOULD
THAT I
WERE
A BETTING
WOMAN...





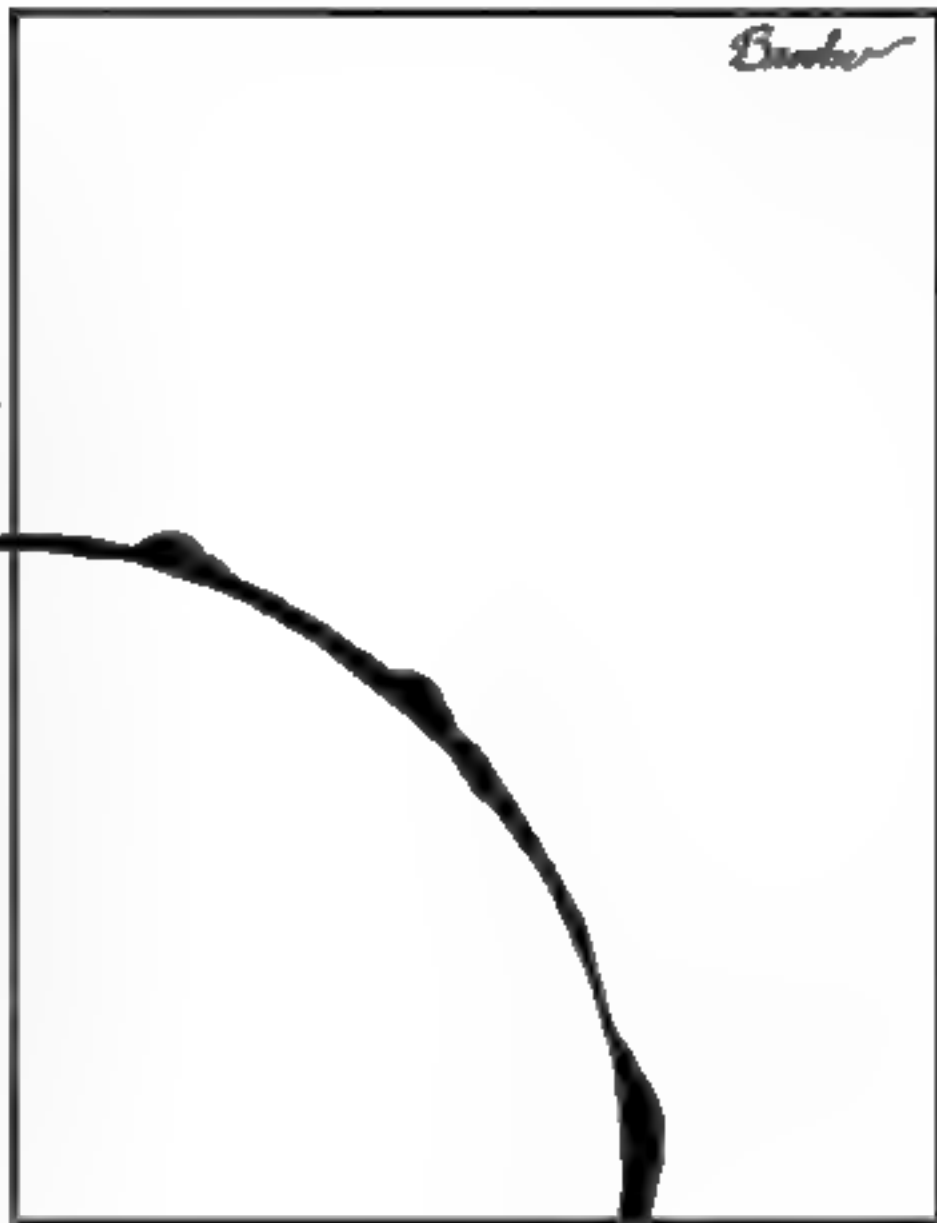
Barker





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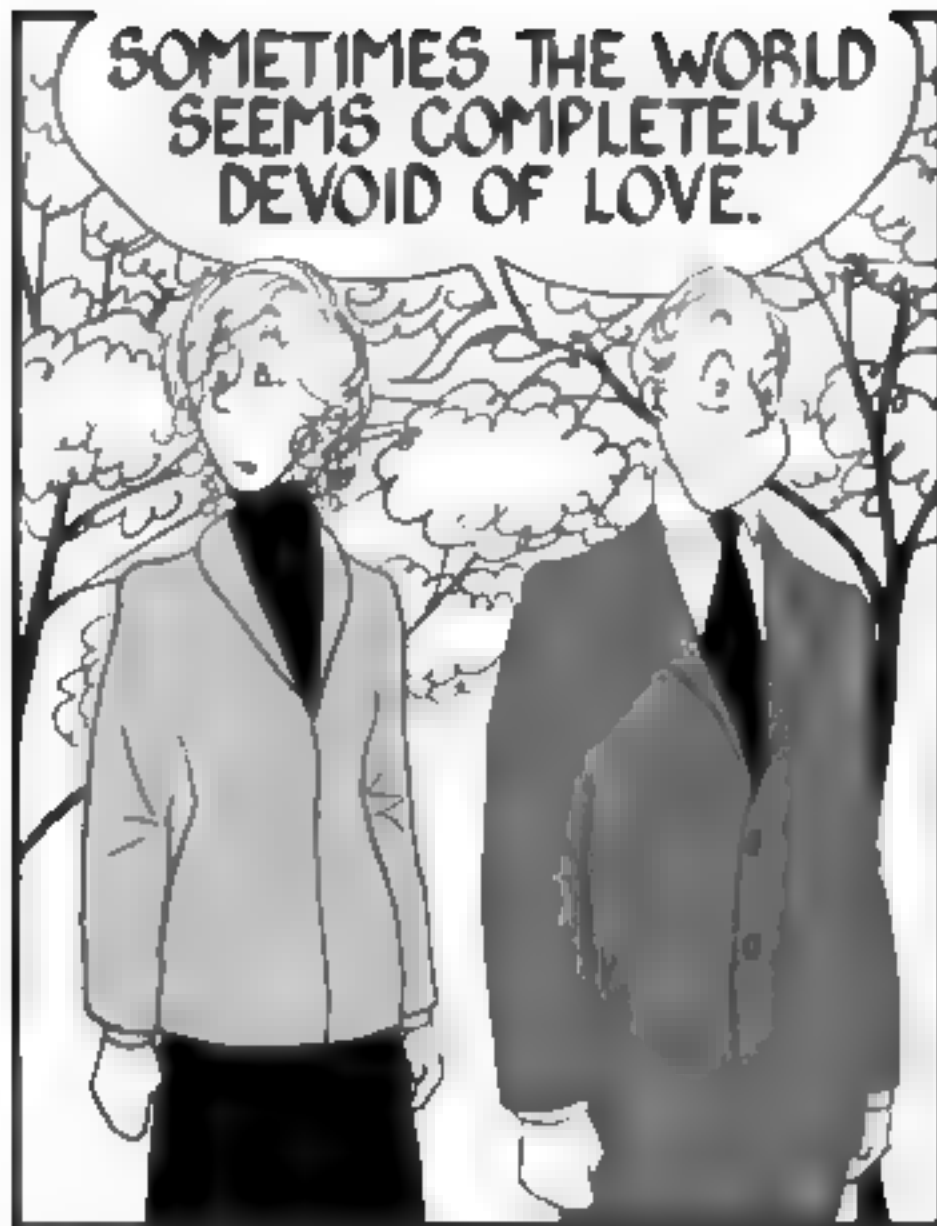
Barber



THAT'S IT?...
...FOR TODAY'S CARTOON
WE HAD TO MAKE OUR
WAY PAST A COFFEE
CUP STAIN?



JUST IMAGINE
THE SIZE OF THE
CREATURE THAT
LEFT IT.



DON'T YOU
EVER FEEL
THE WORLD
IS DEVOID
OF LOVE?

NOT AT ALL.
I FEEL THE
WORLD HAS
A WEALTH
OF...



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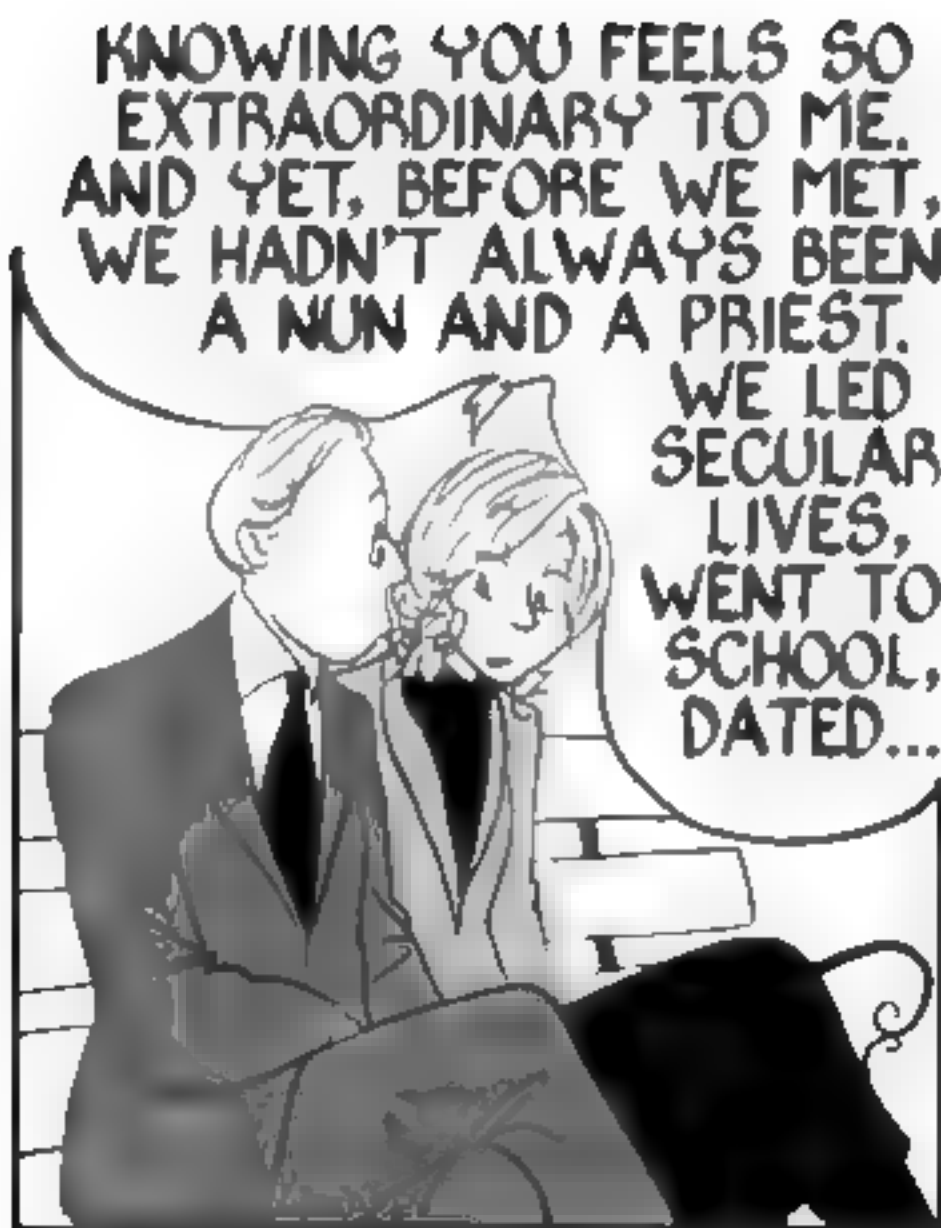


I THINK THE WORLD IS A
VACANT, LOVELESS PIT...
...AND I DARE ANYBODY
TO PROVE TO ME
OTHER-
WISE.

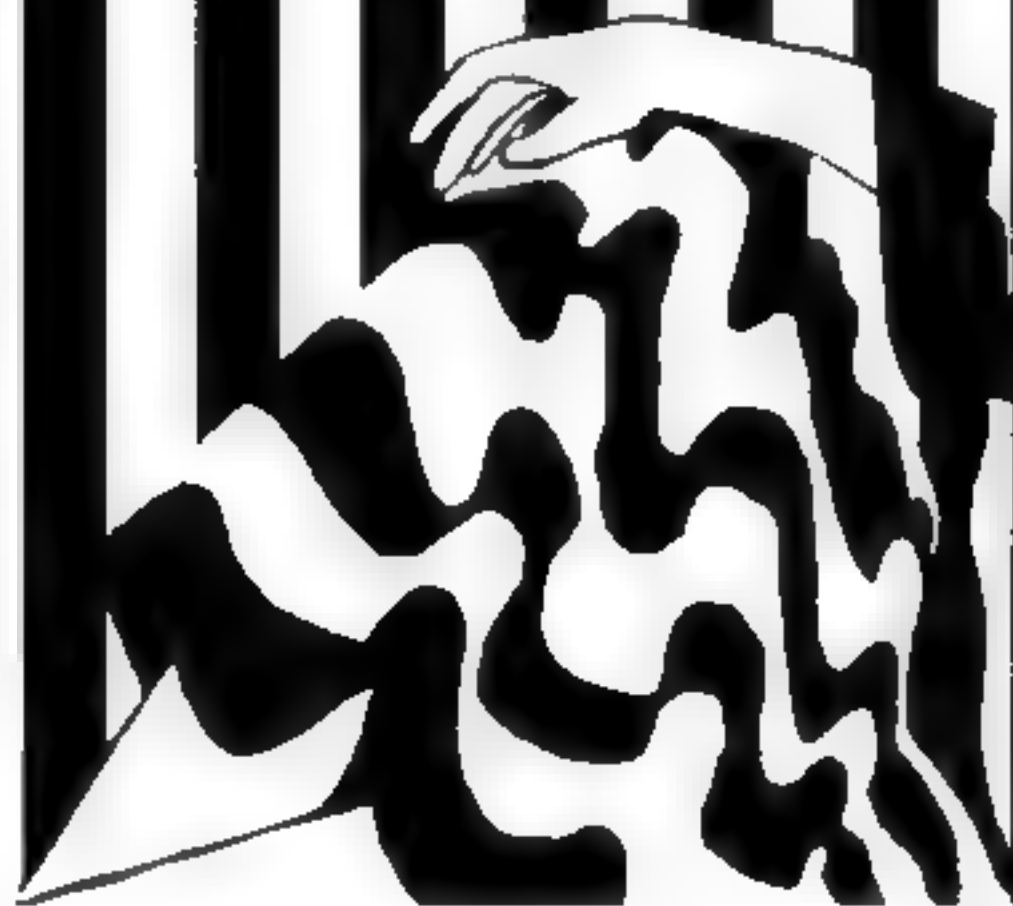


TO BE VANQUISHED AFTER
THROWING DOWN THE
GAUNTLET IS NOT AN
ALTOGETHER
UNDESIRABLE
THING.

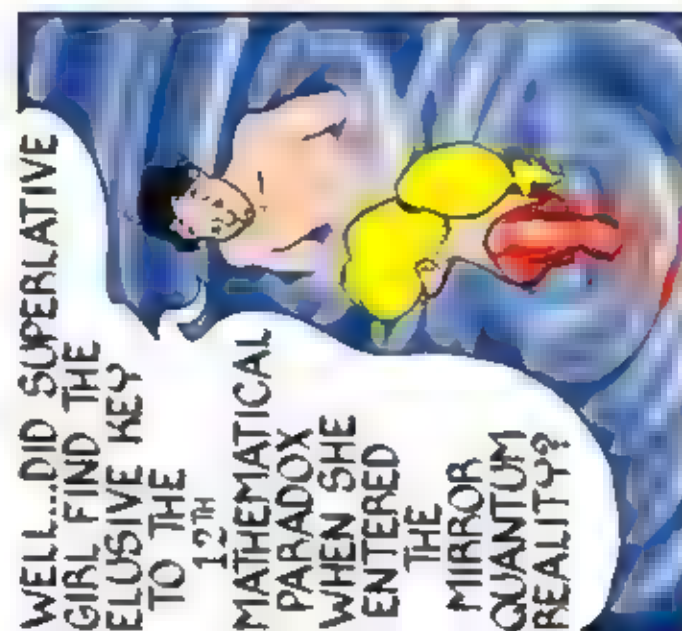
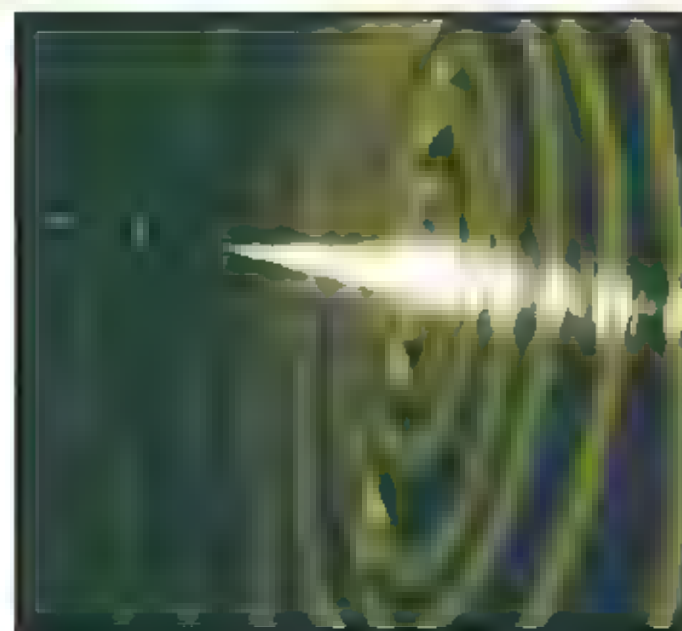
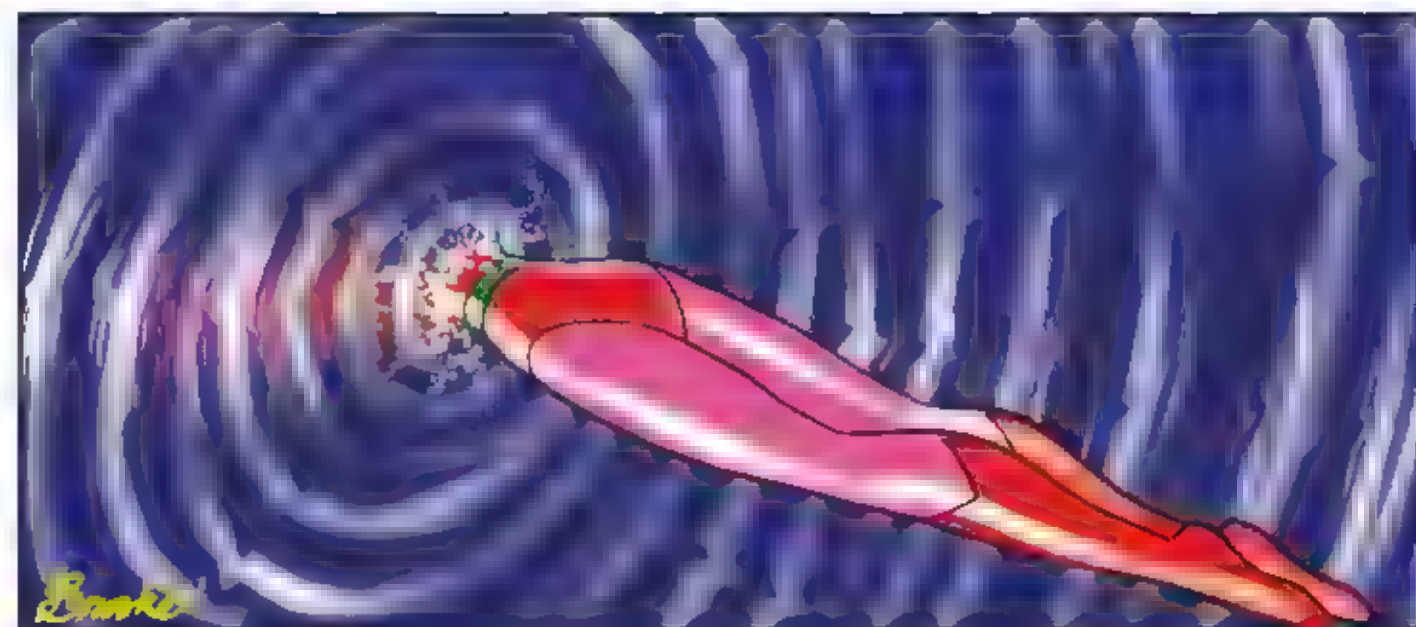
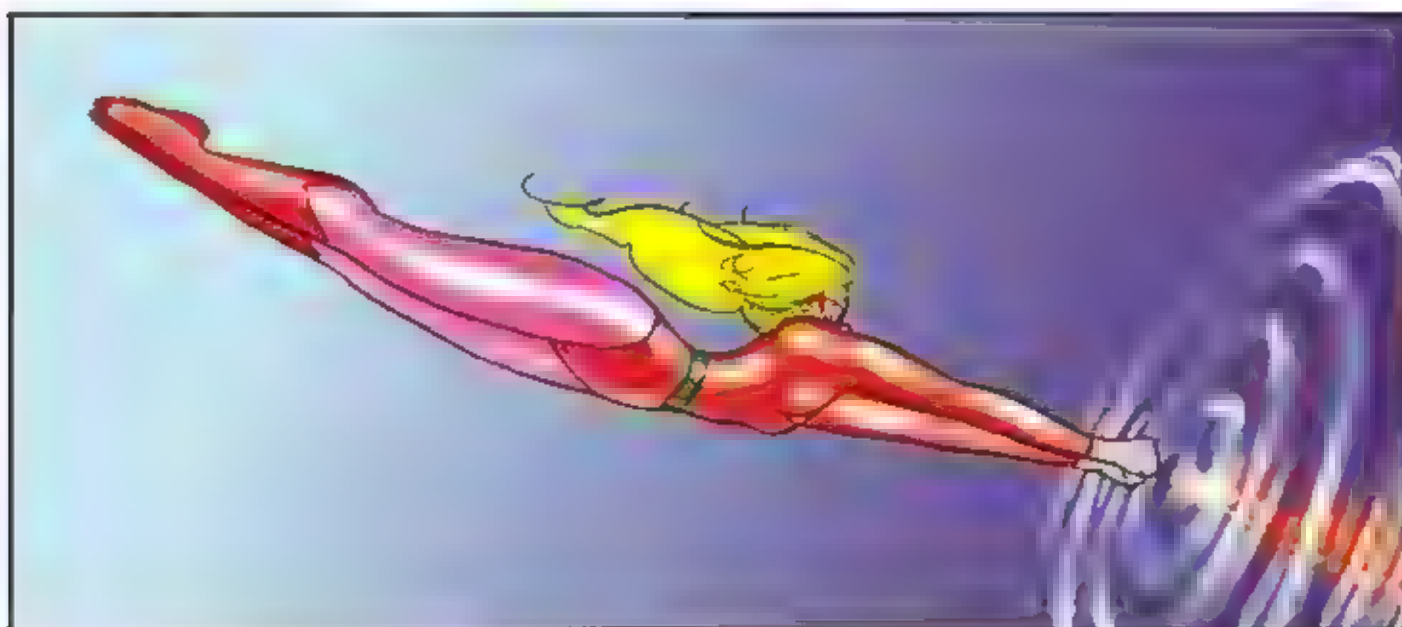




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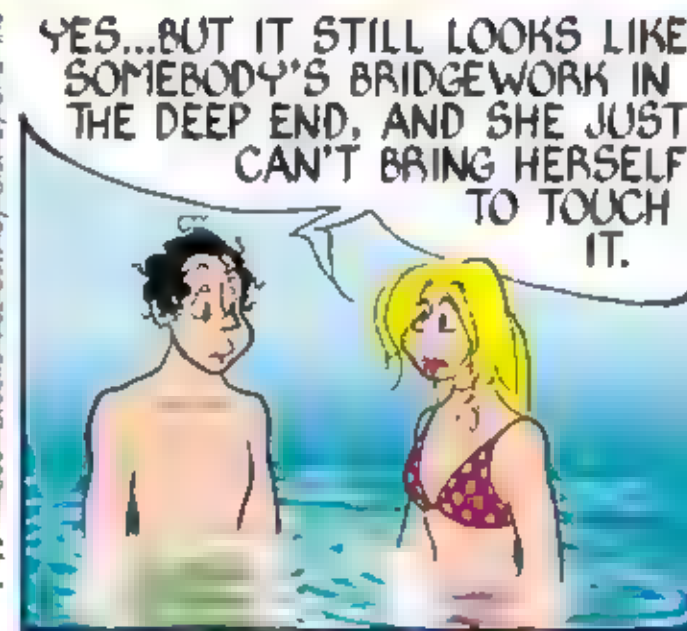


Brooke



WELL...DID SUPERLATIVE
GIRL FIND THE
ELUSIVE KEY
TO THE
12TH
MATHEMATICAL
PARADOX
WHEN SHE
ENTERED
THE
MIRROR
QUANTUM
REALITY?

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YES...BUT IT STILL LOOKS LIKE
SOMEBODY'S BRIDGEWORK IN
THE DEEP END, AND SHE JUST
CAN'T BRING HERSELF
TO TOUCH
IT.

SO YOU KNOW
THIS DATING
PROCESS?...
YOU WENT
OUT WITH
LOTS OF
BOYS?

OH,
TONS.



Brooke



CALL ME SILLY, BUT
I PREFER NOT TO HEAR
ABOUT YOUR PAST SOCIAL
LIFE IN TERMS OF
WEIGHTS AND
MEASURES.

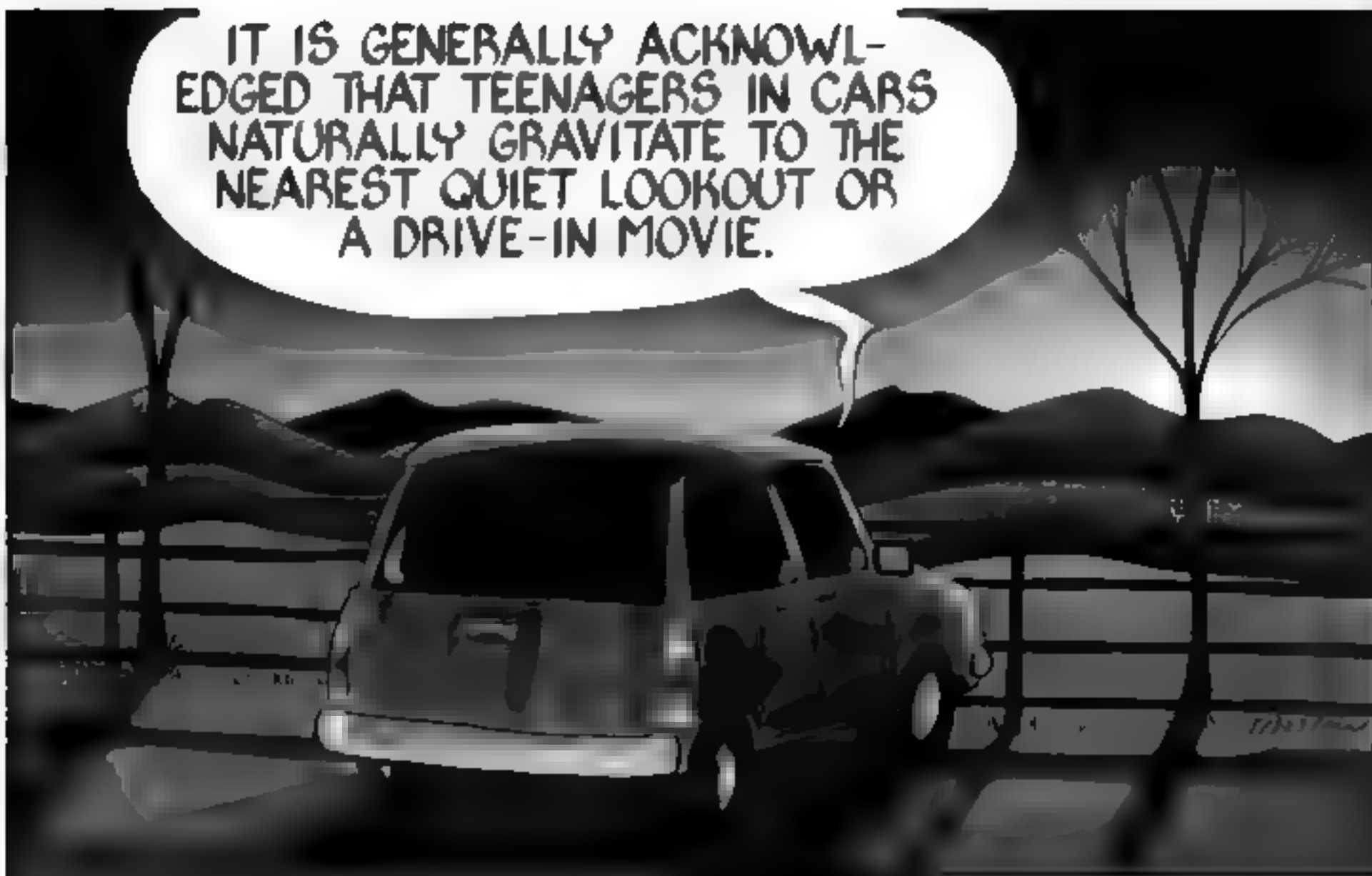
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SHE HAS DATED, HAD
HIGH SCHOOL BOYFRIENDS,
A SOCIAL CALENDAR...
...I HAVE NO EXPERIENCE,
NO PAST TO GUIDE ME...



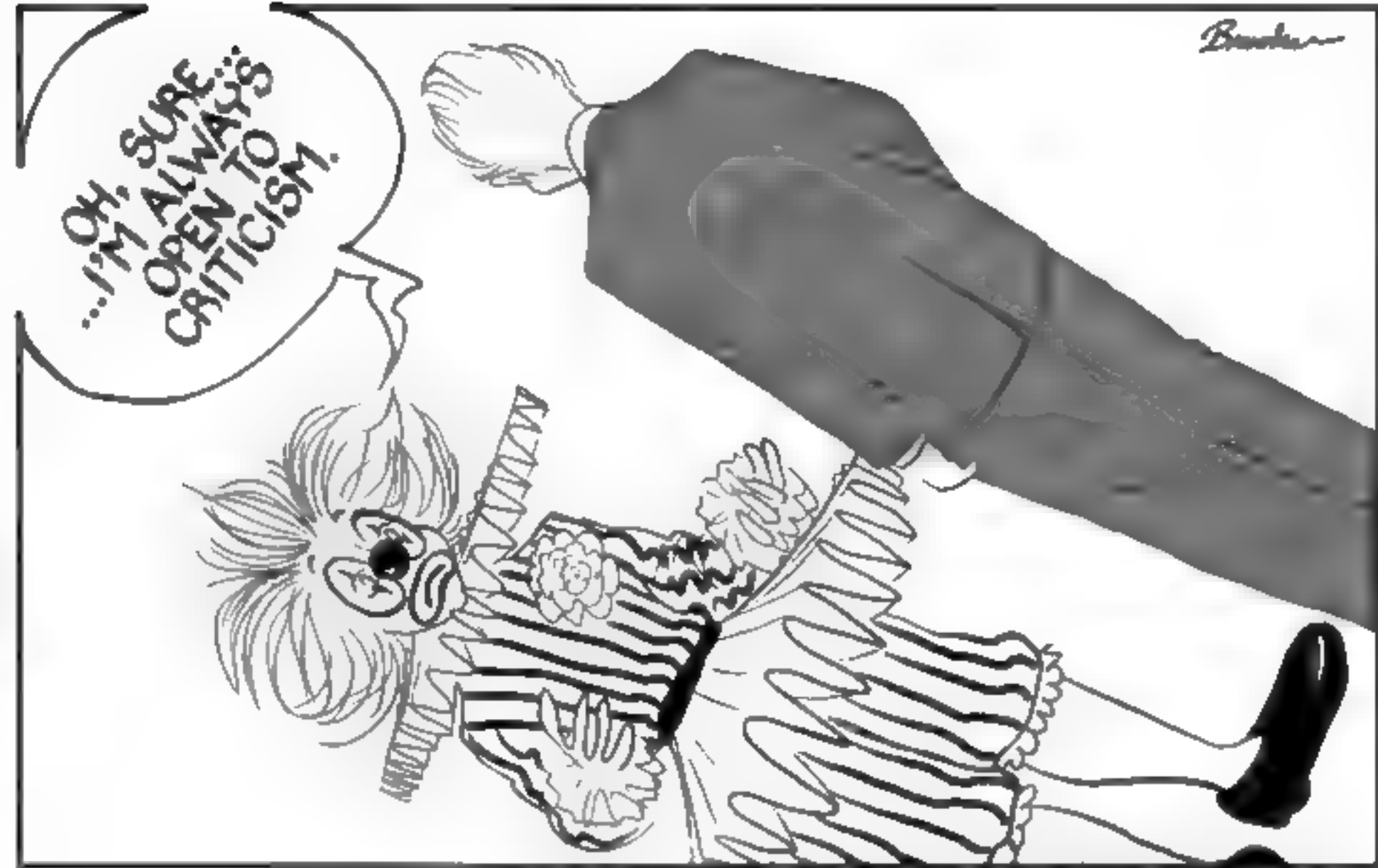
IT IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TEENAGERS IN CARS NATURALLY GRAVITATE TO THE NEAREST QUIET LOOKOUT OR A DRIVE-IN MOVIE.



BOY, THOSE TEENAGERS AREN'T HALF STUPID.



Boomer





A LOCUTIONARY
FIELD GUIDE
TO EARTH

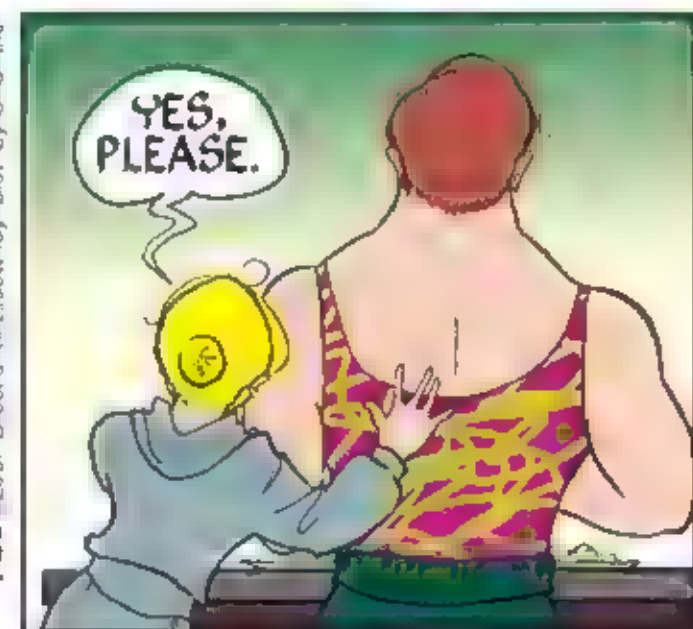
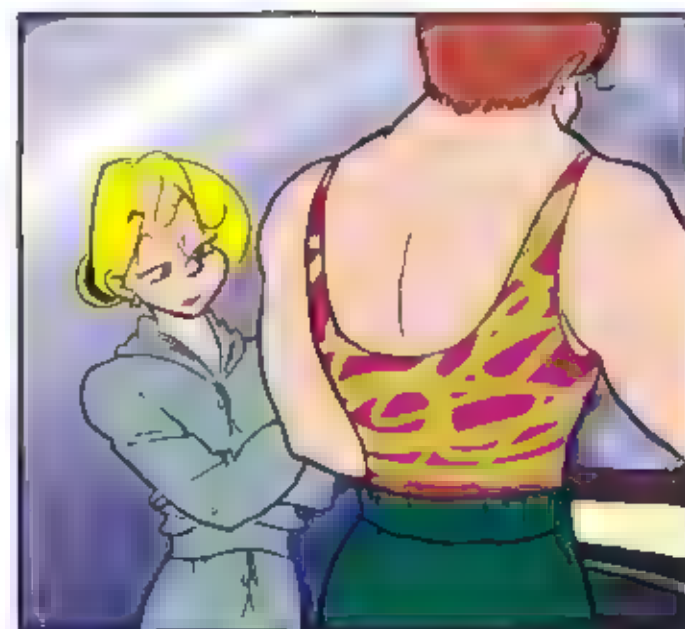
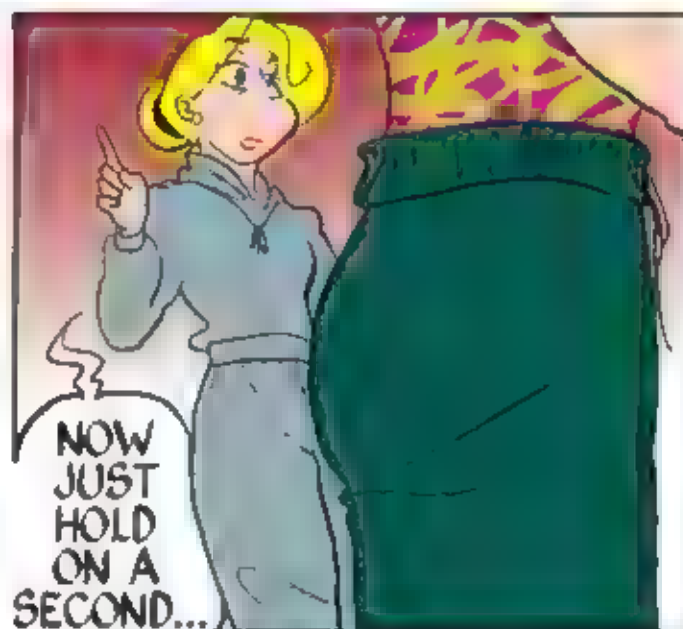
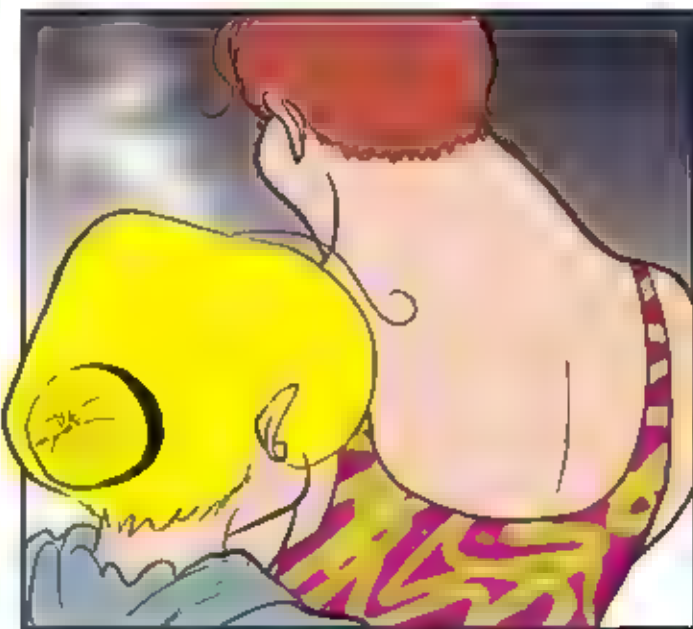
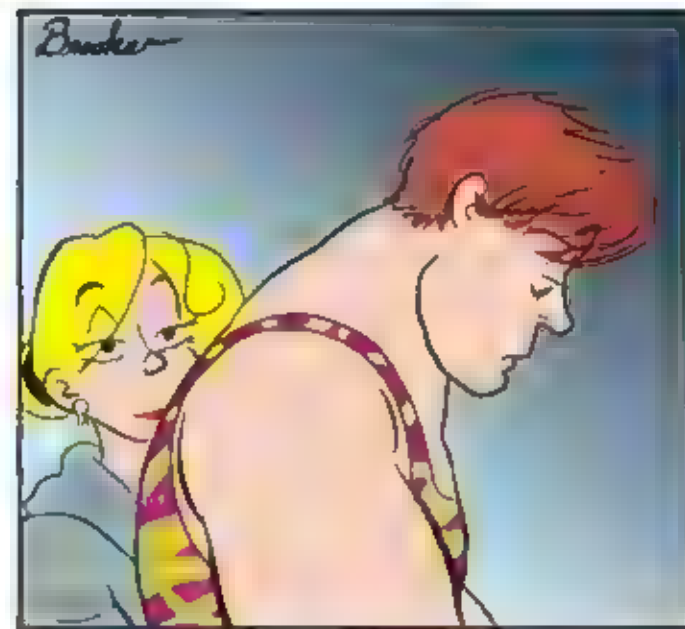
PATRIOTISM:
NOUN

Boake



THE WILLING ACT OF
PUTTING ONE'S WELL-BEING AT RISK
FOR POLITICIANS WHO ARE NOT
SIMILARLY DISPOSED.

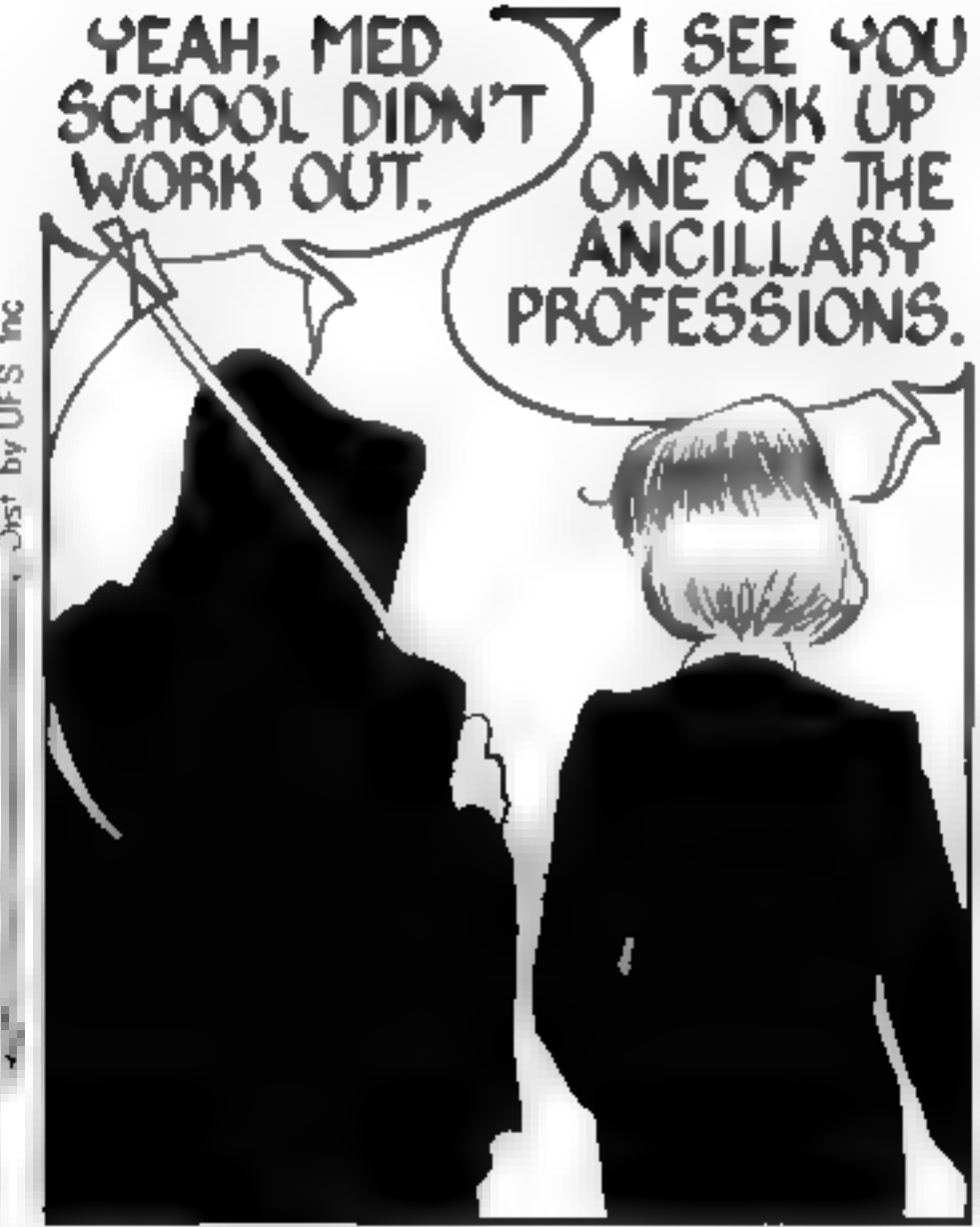








Burber



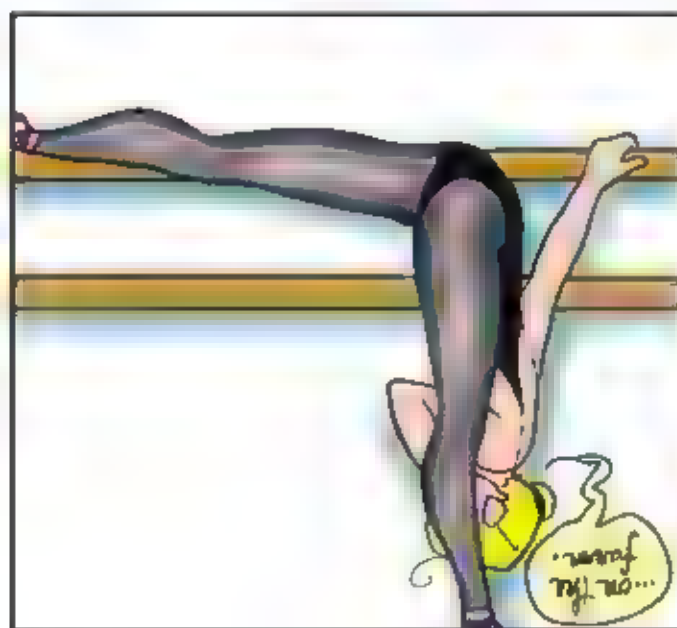
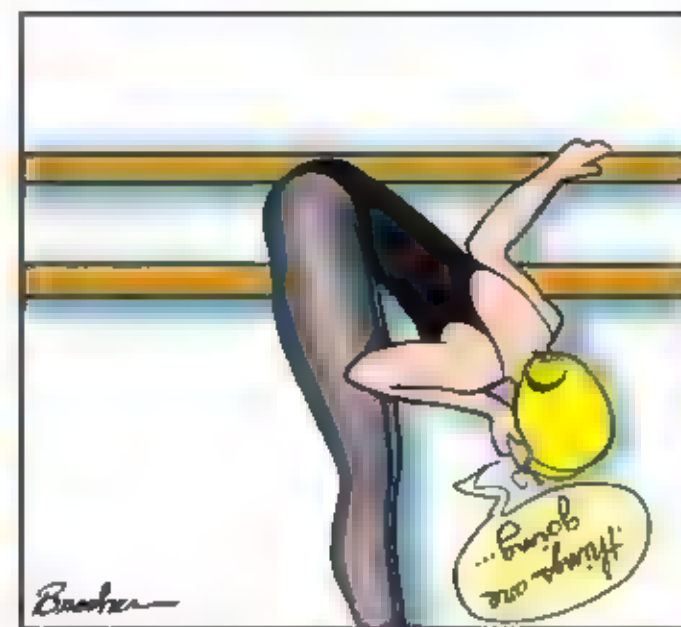
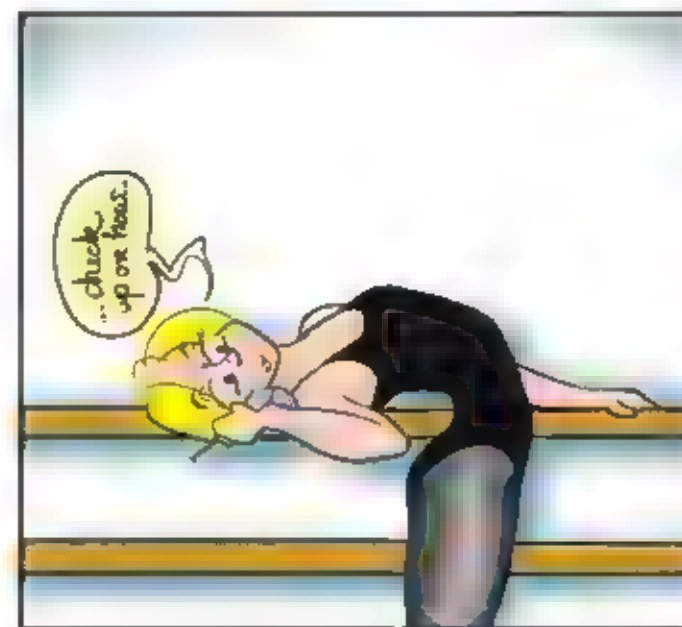
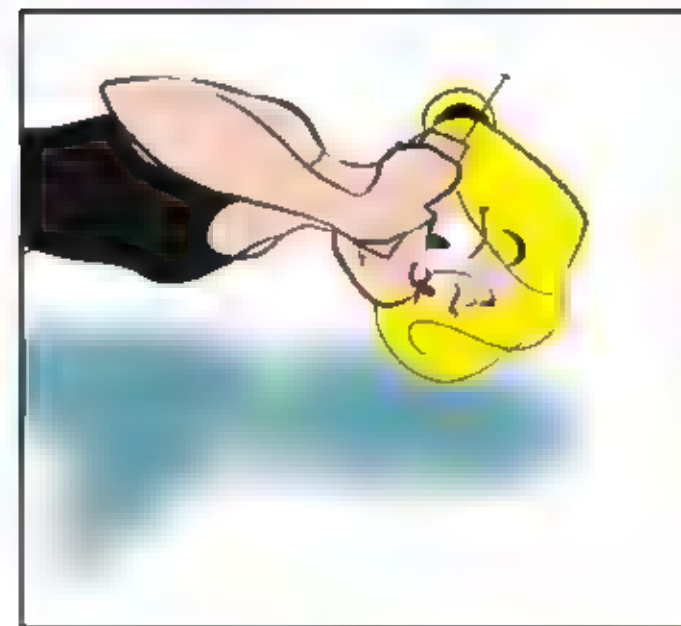
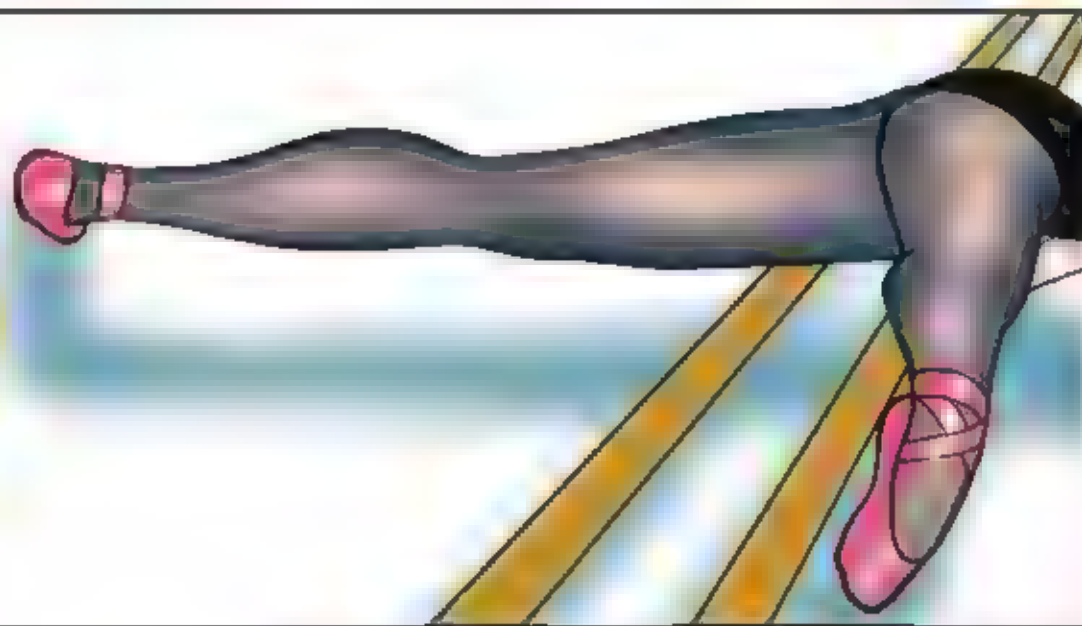
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TAKE HEED! IT IS TIME
TO CONFRONT YOUR OWN
MORTALITY!

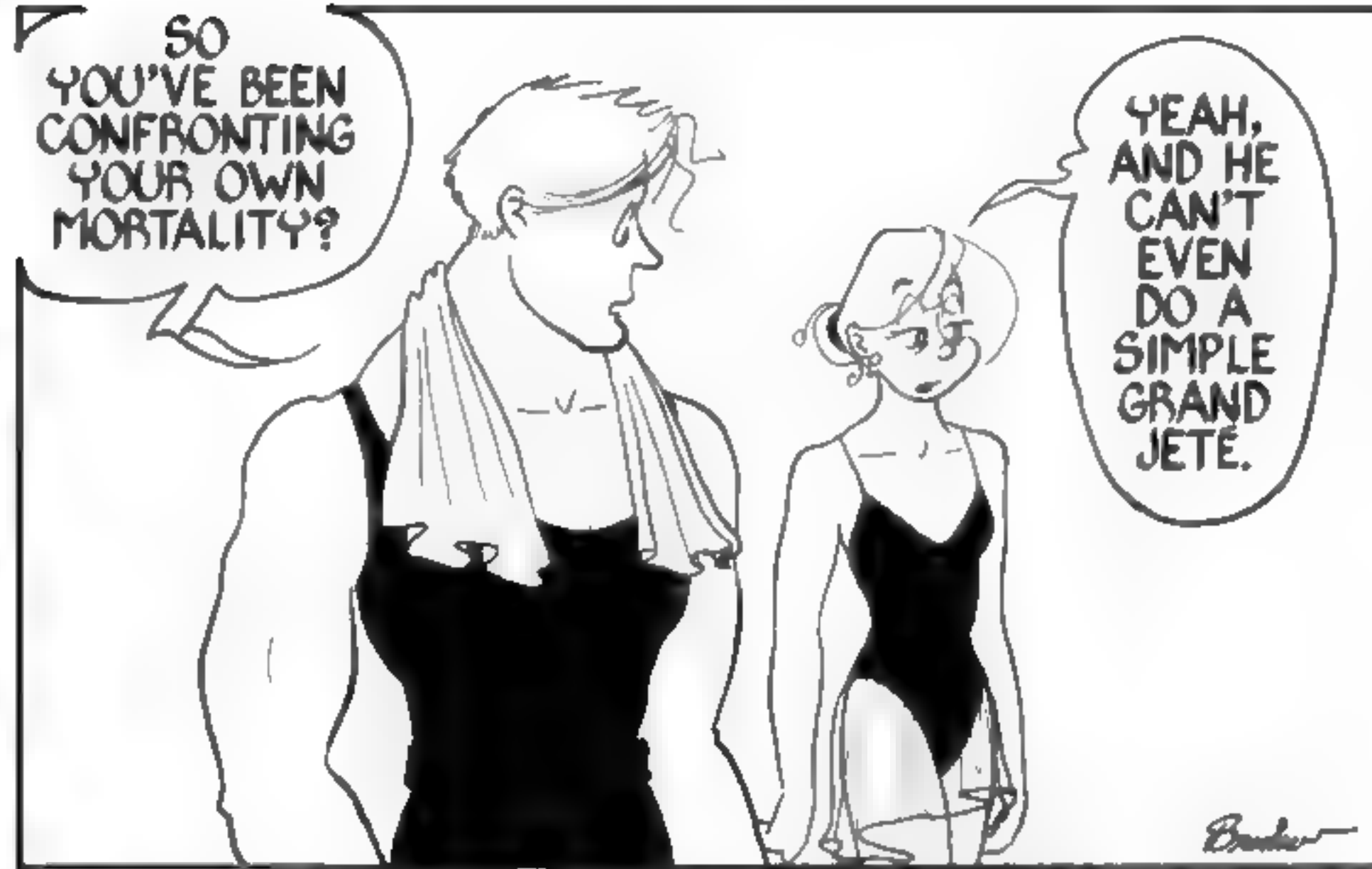




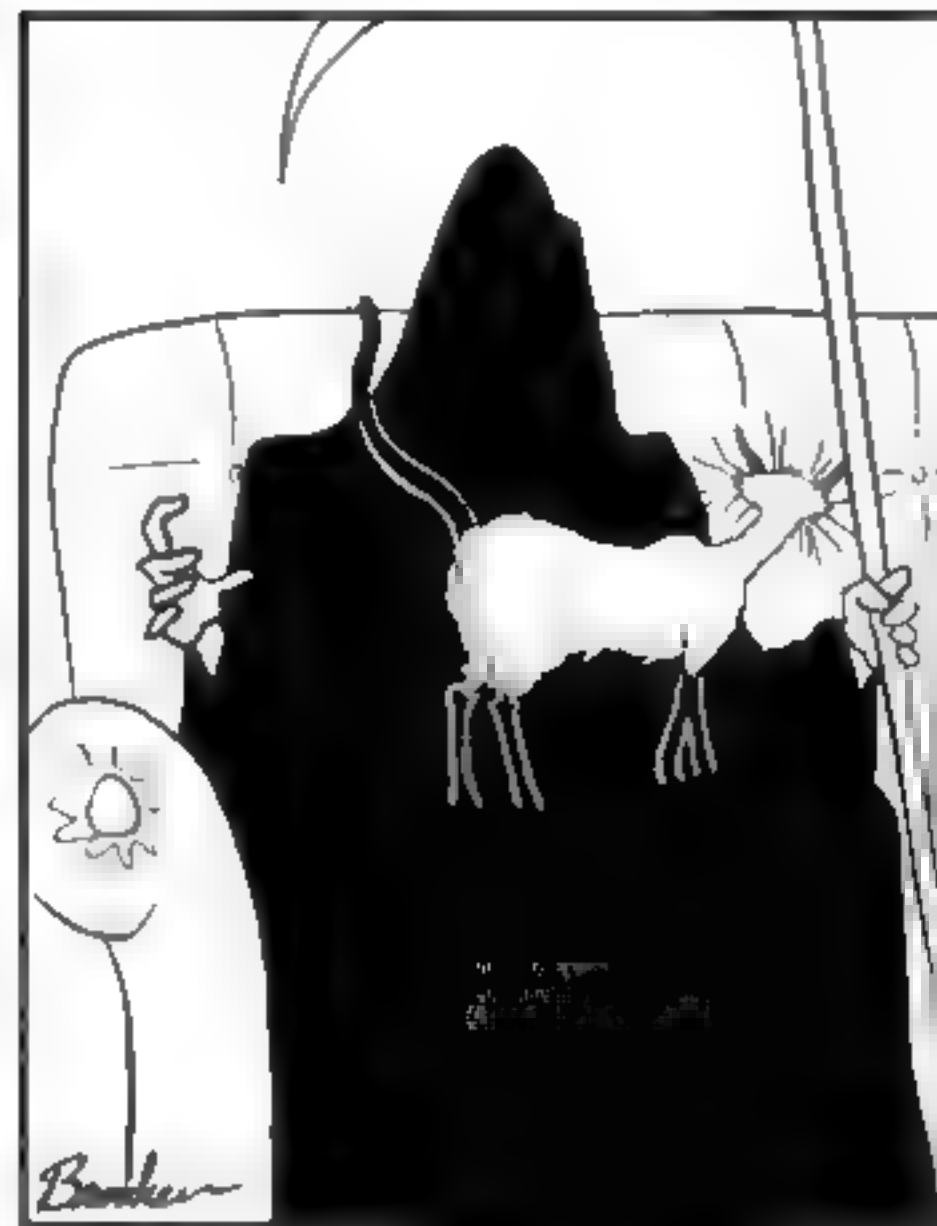






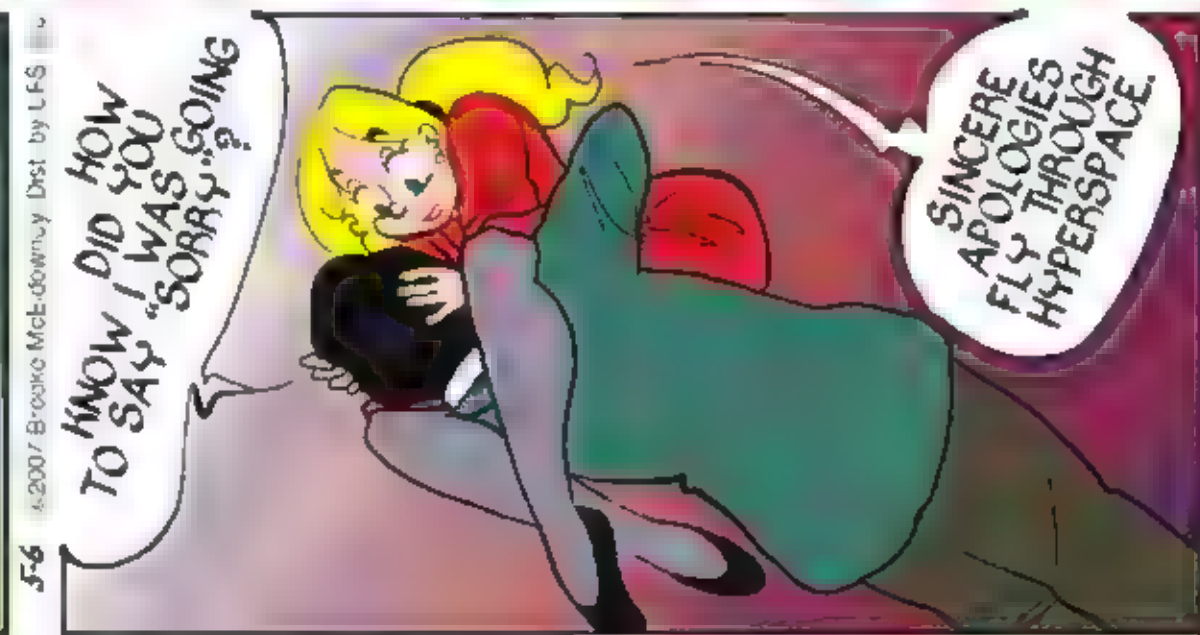
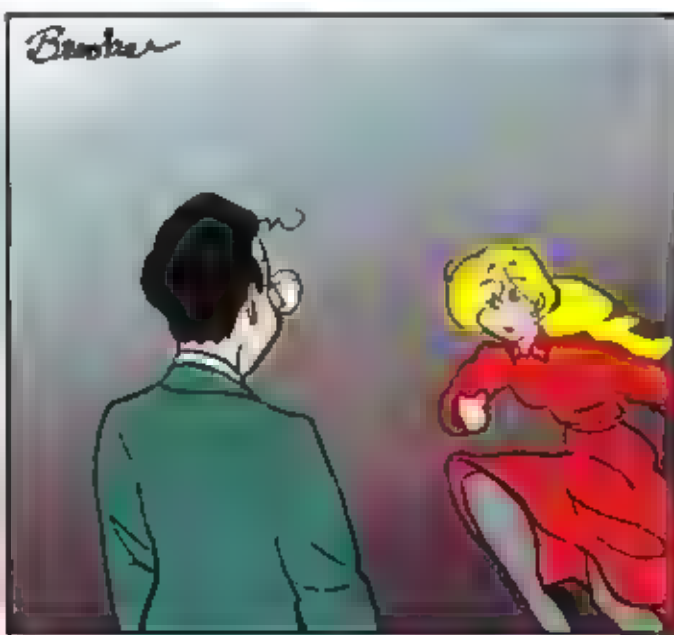
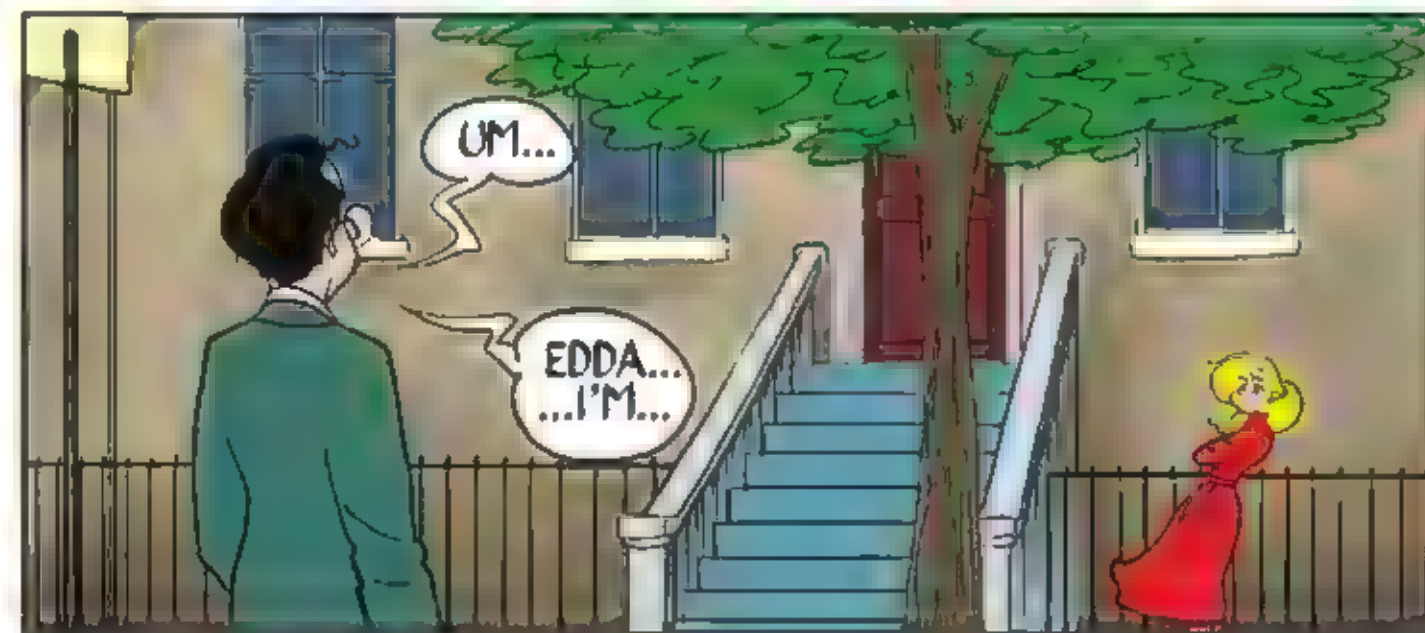




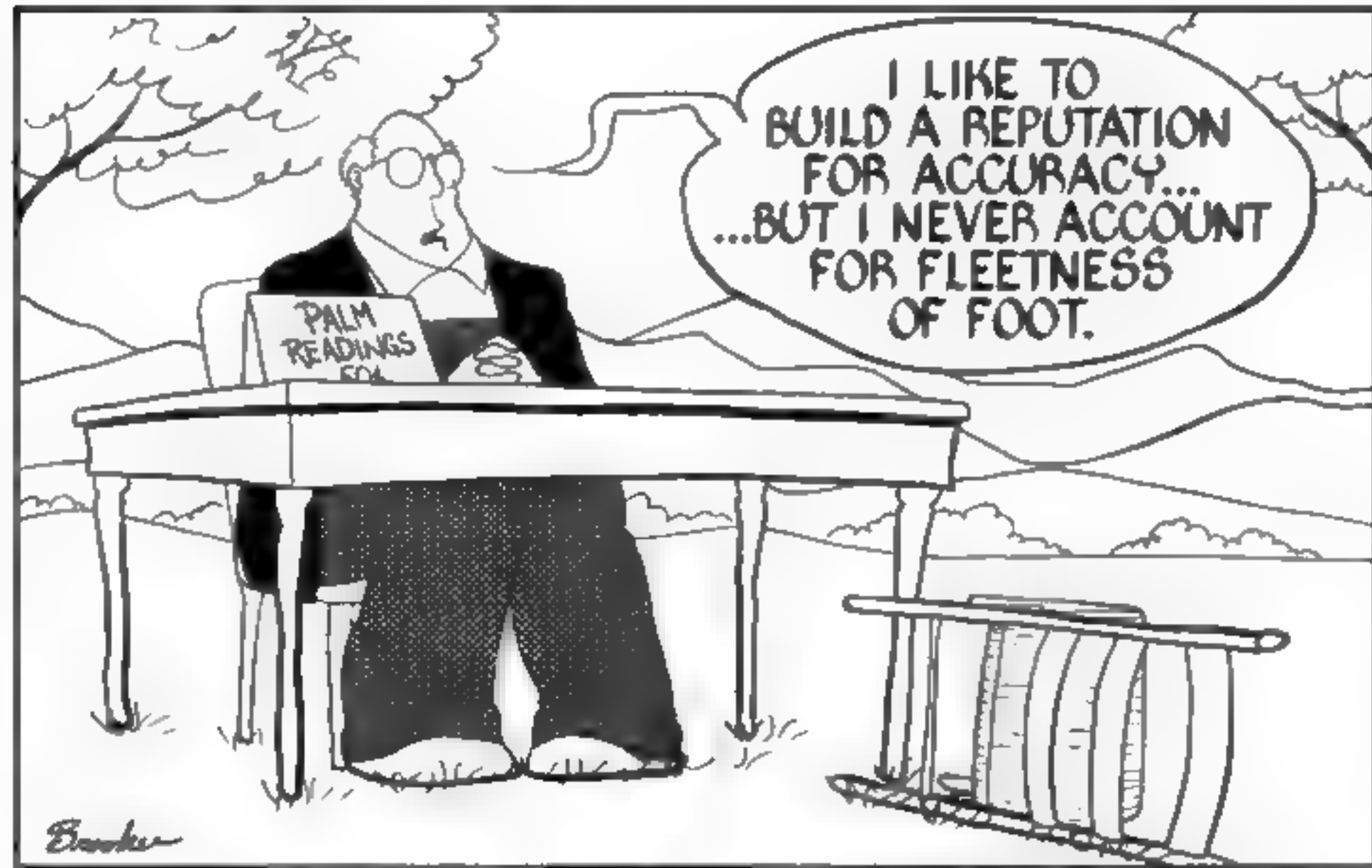


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SOON YOU WILL BE FALLEN UPON
BY A FOUR HUNDRED POUND
DAIRY FARMER WHO WILL
MARCEL YOUR
HAIR WITH HIS
TONGUE.



Brooke



IN A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS
YOU WILL GIVE YOURSELF
TO A TALL, BLOND YOUNG
MAN, HIS TANNED BODY
STRIPPED TO THE WAIST, HIS
LEAN, MUSCULAR FRAME
STREAKED WITH SWEAT.

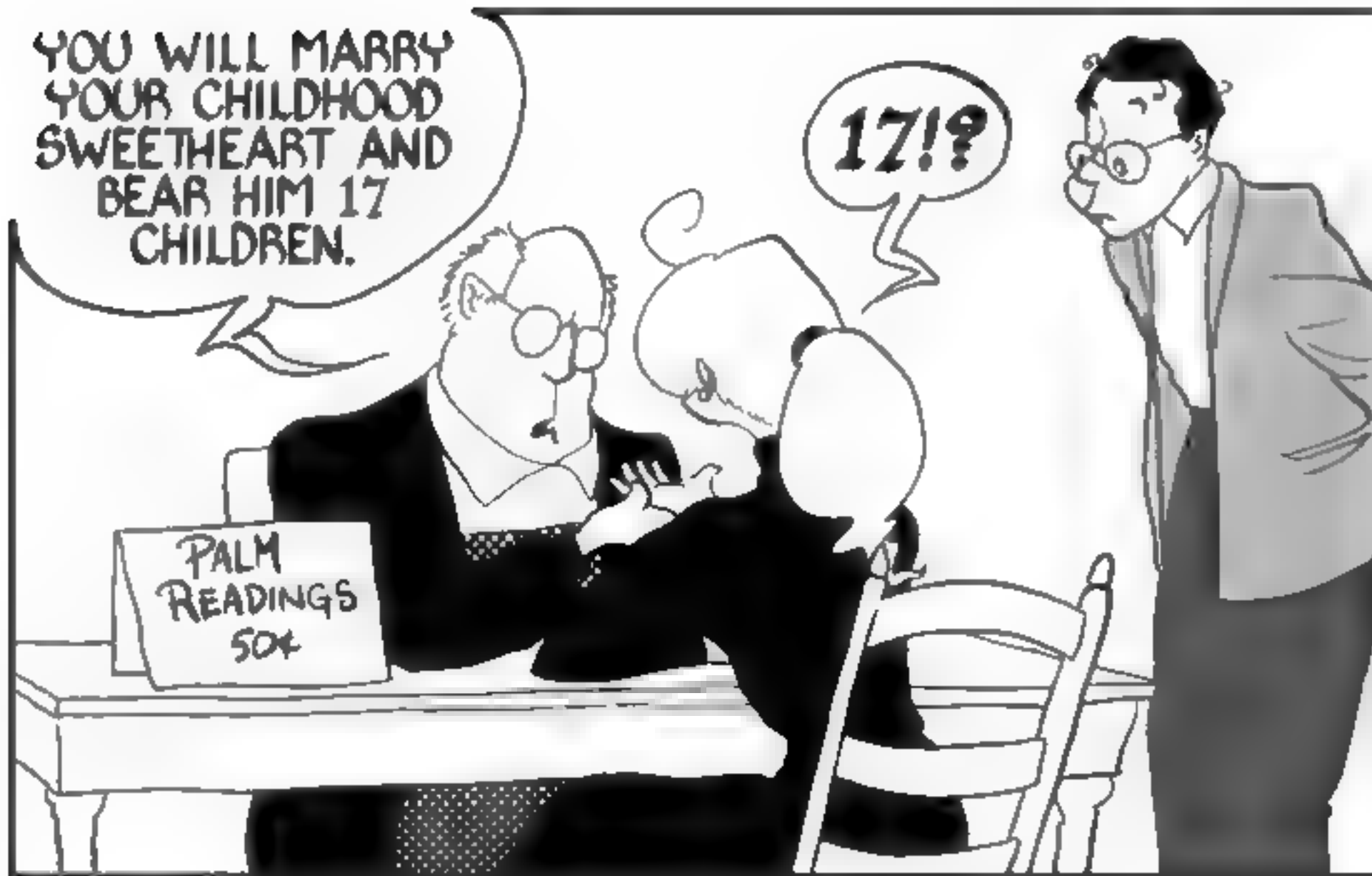


YOU WILL GAZE INTO THE UNKNOWN
AND LIVE TO TELL ABOUT IT.

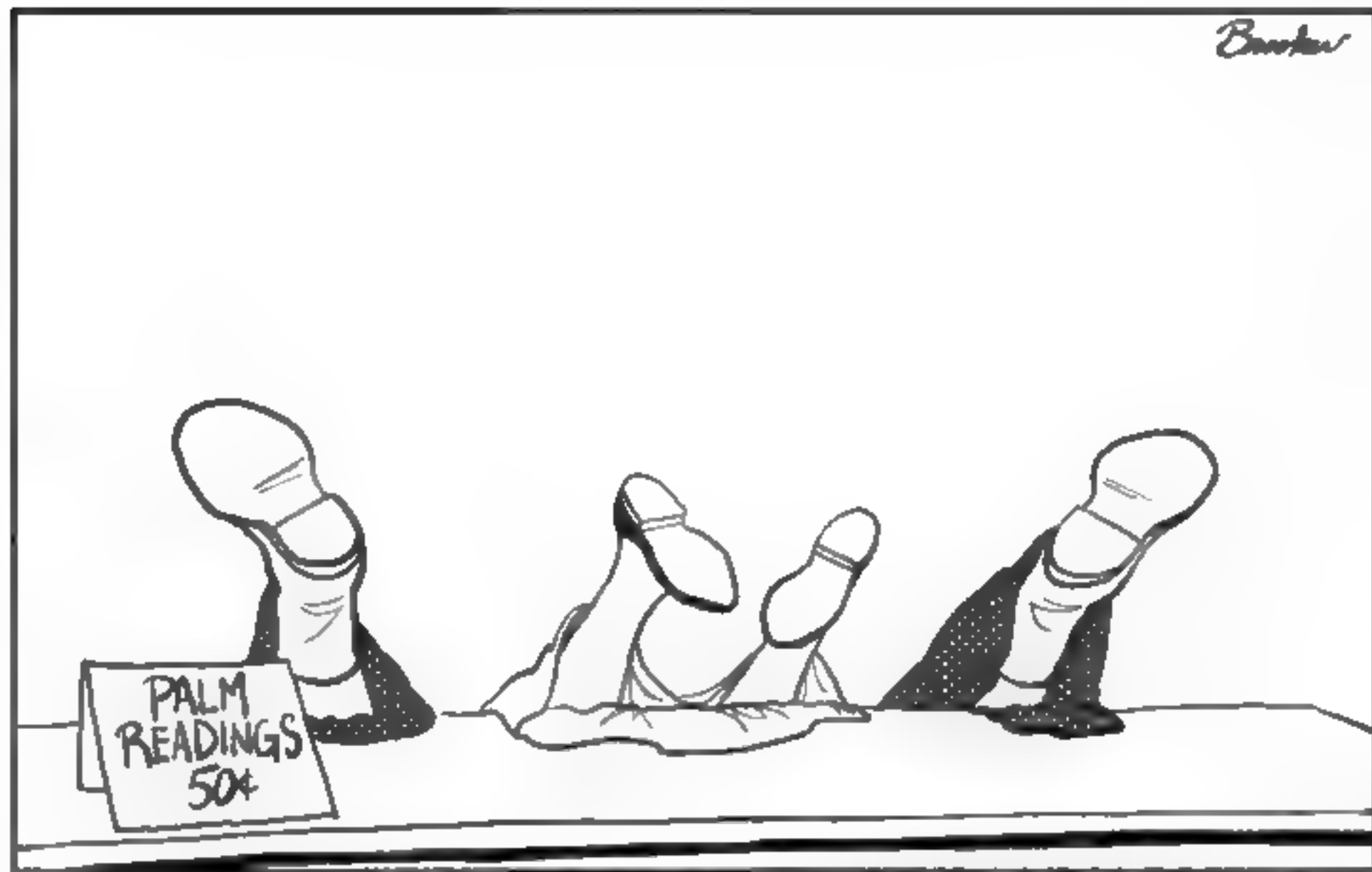


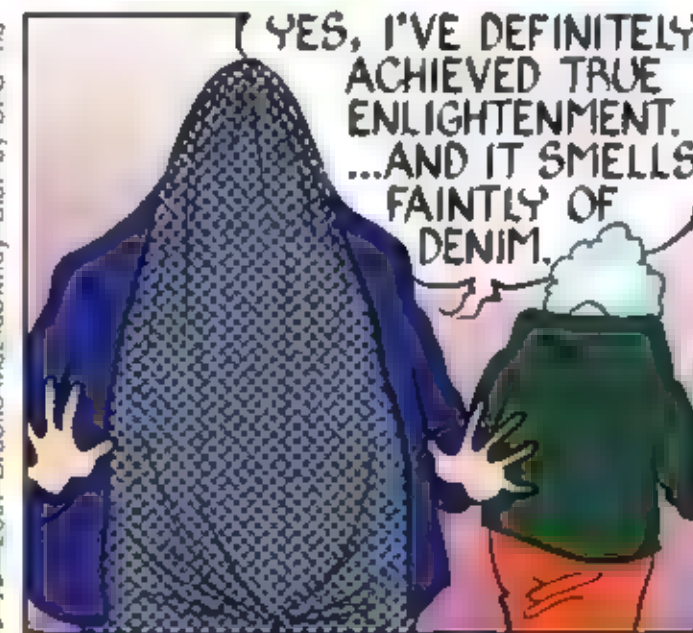
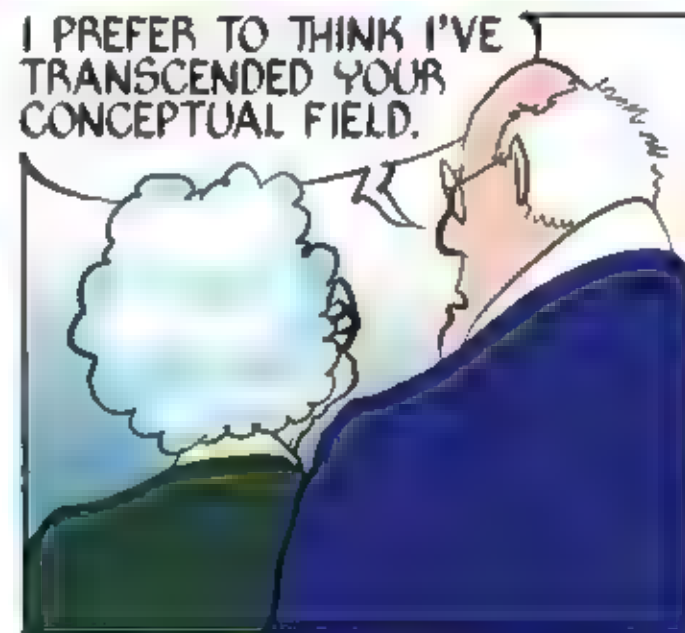
Barker

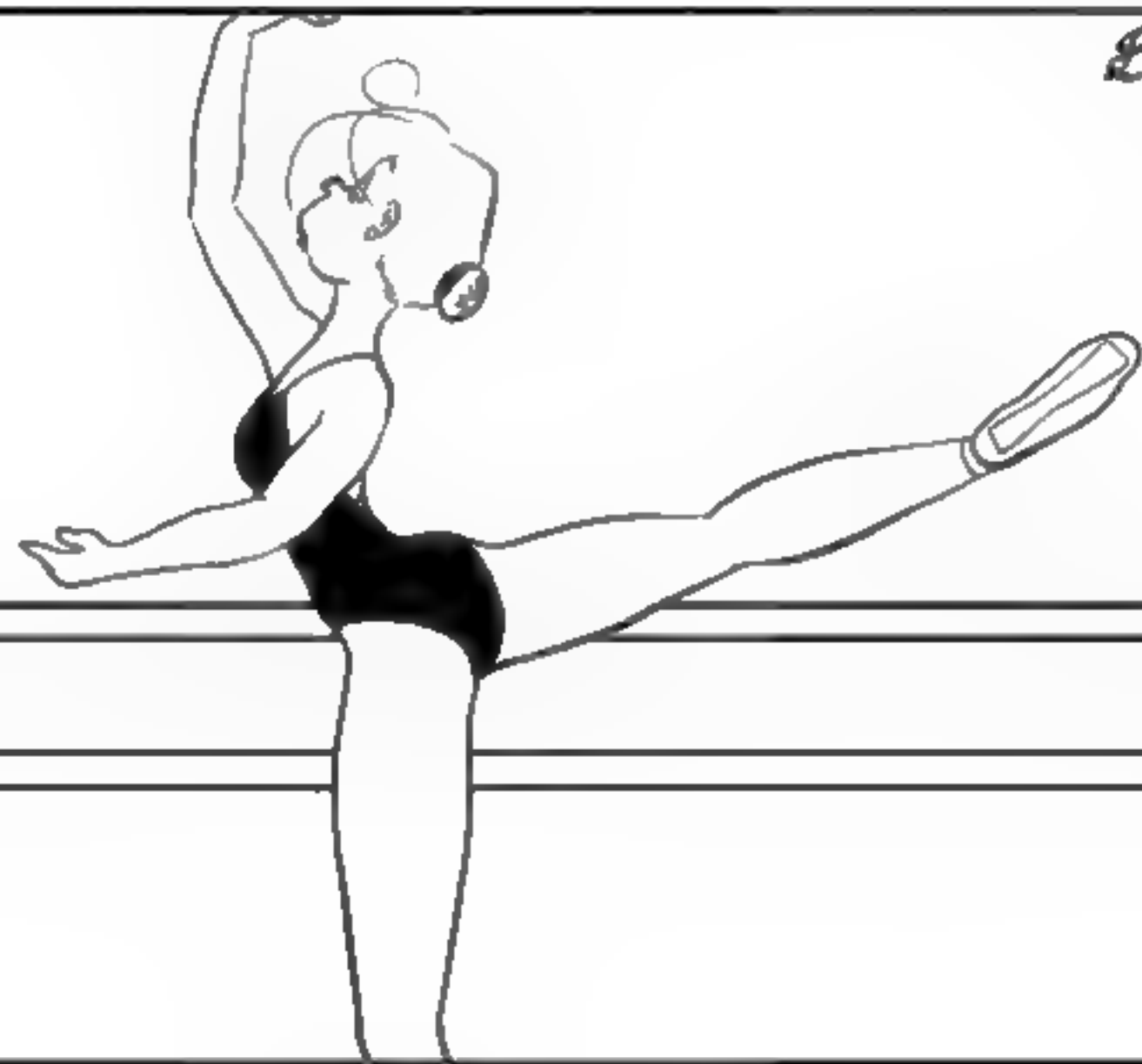




YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF LOOKING AT A TALL,
SILVER-HAIRED STRANGER, A STRANGER OF EXOTIC
ORIGINS, OF DIGNIFIED BEARING AND SOPHISTICATED
DISCOURSE, A STRANGER BOTH WORLDLY AND
OTHERWORLDLY...
...A STRANGER OVER
WHOSE FACE YOU
WILL RAIN
THOUSANDS
OF BURNING...







Edda danced in the ballet.
That was her *job*. “Job” was not the word
other people chose to describe what Edda did,
but the right word nonetheless. Words were queer
that way, Edda often thought. They classified things.
In her case they could place someone
in another dimension.

Continued.



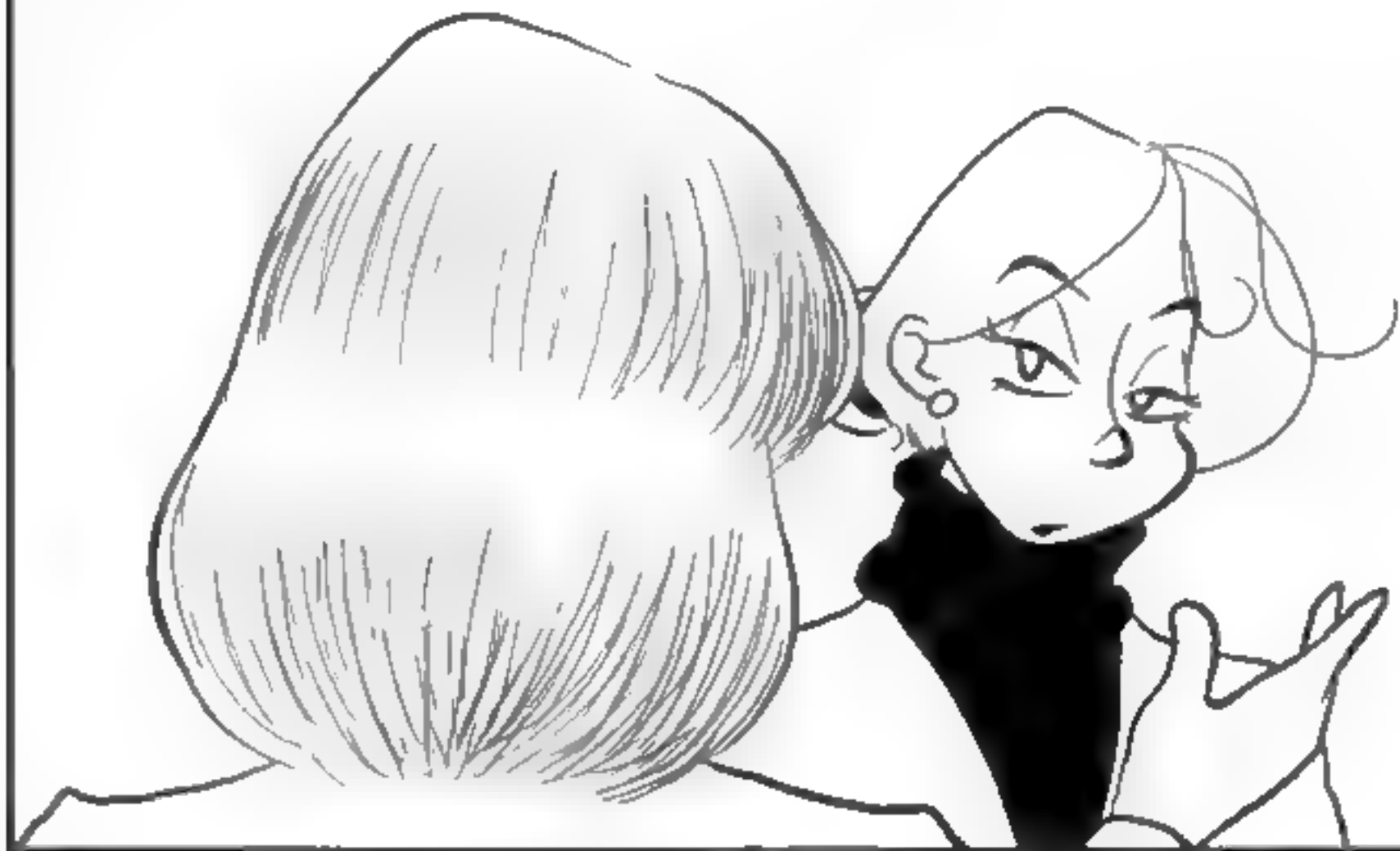
Brooke



To people who lead their lives outside the dance studio - to men in suits and ties, to women carrying attaché cases and wearing dark skirts and high heels - Edda's work was not a job, and her job was not work. They didn't quite know what it was. They thought it involved wearing leotards and tulle, if they thought about it at all. Sometimes, sitting on the floor in the corner of a dance studio during a rehearsal, Edda reflected on that, and wondered.

Continued.

Brooke



On the street, people would talk to Edda, and the talk would turn, as talk will, to work. "What do you do?" they would say to her. Edda, with a deep breath drawn from repeated exposure to corrosive platitudes, would reply that she was a dancer.

"That sounds like fun!" they would exude, then add, "But, what do you do for a regular job?" Smiling, she would say, "I harvest souls for Satan, and sell memberships to The Parasite of the Month Club." Her retreat was accompanied only by a nagging feeling of guilt that she felt no guilt.

Continued.



Brooke

"Do you think what we do is a job?"
Edda asked her ballet partner Seth.
Seth lifted her above his head with both arms,
then, with one hand, held her, effortlessly
floating, seven feet above the floor.

"A job?" said Seth,
sweat trickling down his neck.

"Have you any idea
how much you weigh?"

Continued

"Do you think what I do is a job?"
Edda asked her boyfriend, at the end of the day.
Her boyfriend weighed his possible answers.
He sorted and picked through words
such as "inspiration," "artistry," "beauty,"
"expression." Then he looked at Edda.
She was drooling on his sleeve, asleep.
He covered her with a blanket.
"Yes," he said, "I think it is a job."

Continued



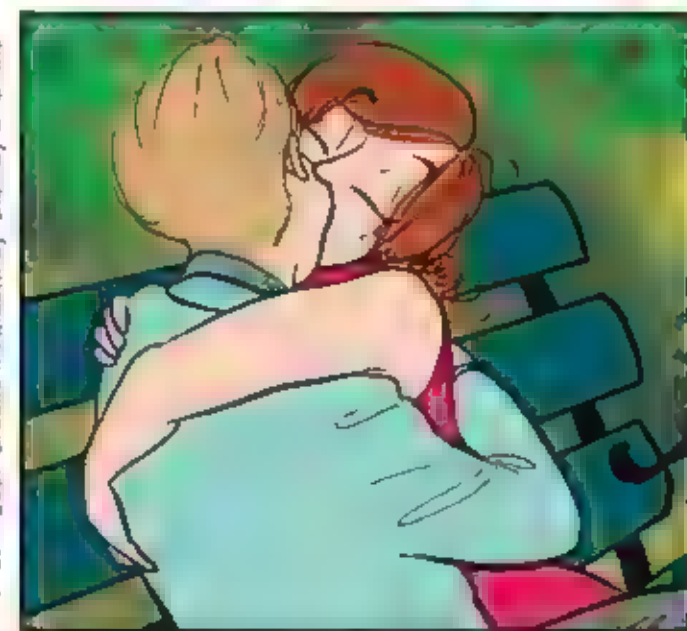
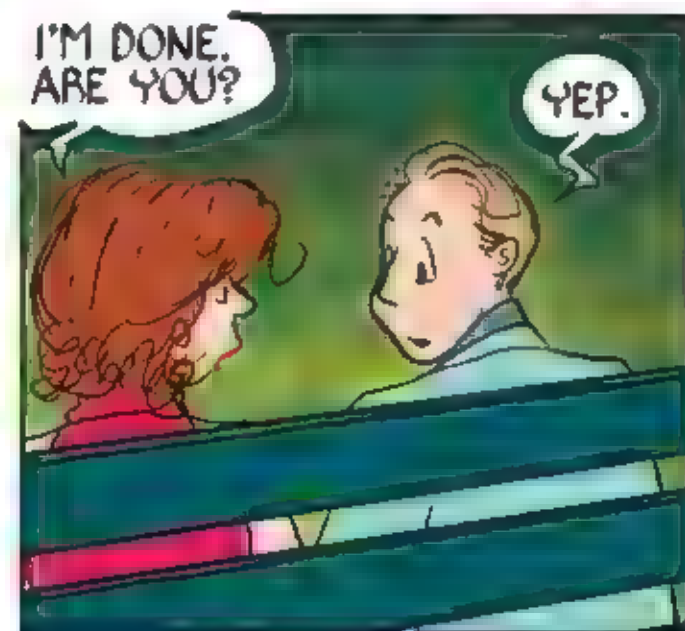
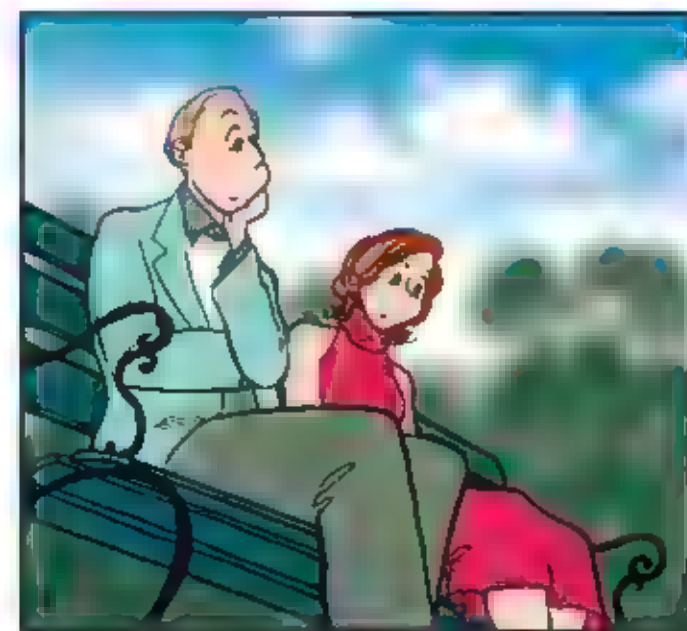
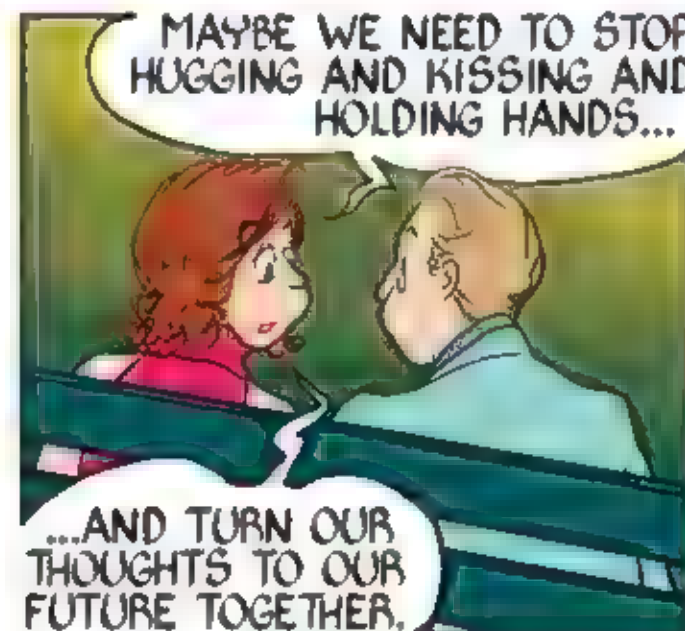
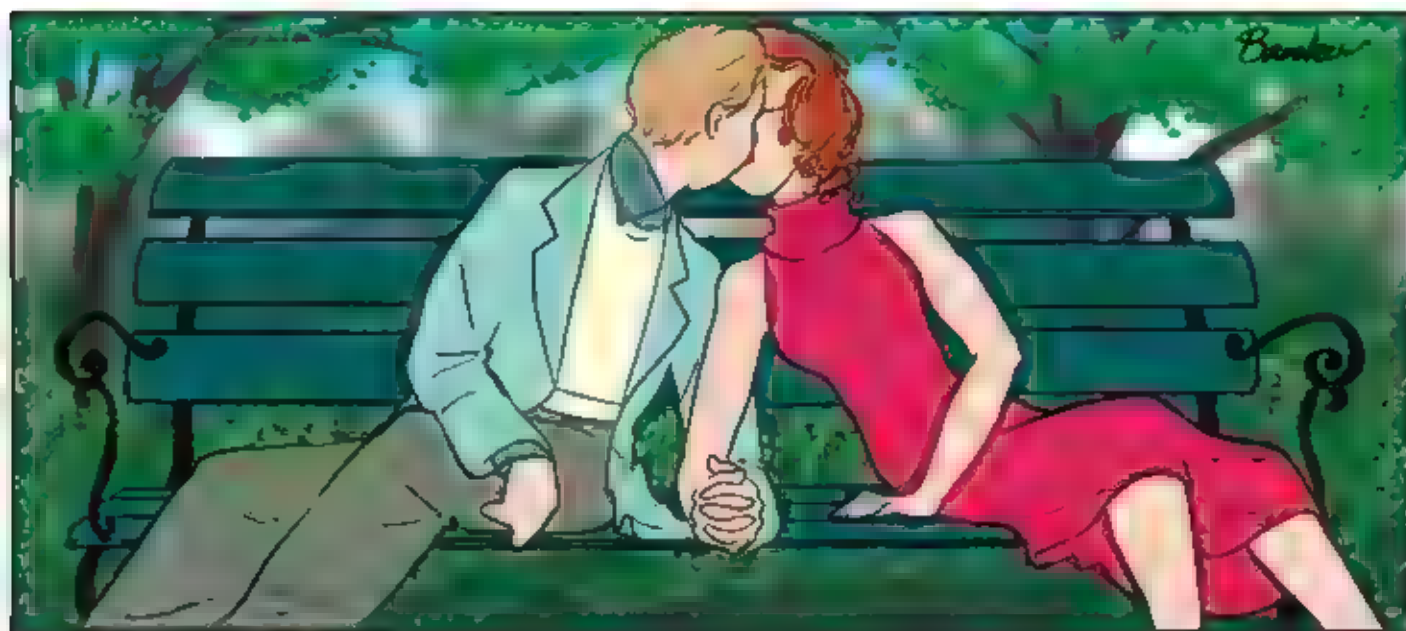
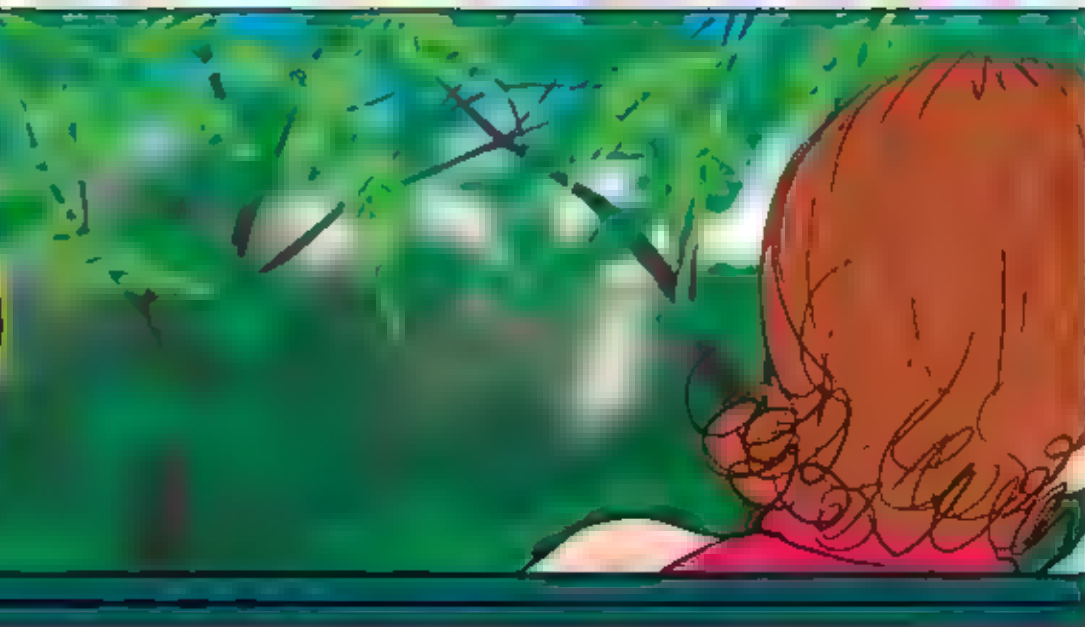
One evening of a late summer day,
Edda found herself shedding the
tensions of rehearsal by taking a stroll
in a secluded, local oasis called
Damrosch Park.

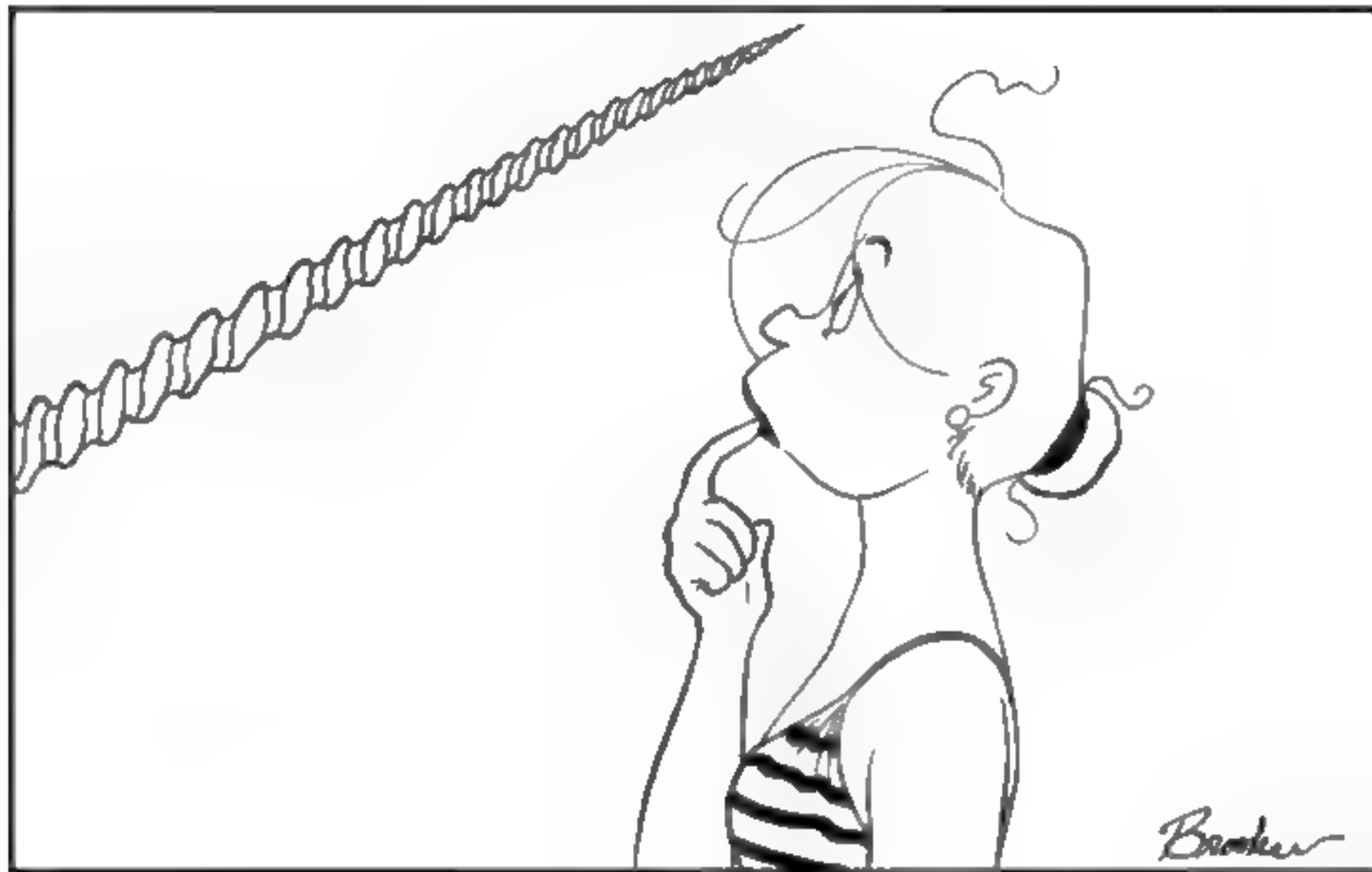
For uncounted minutes, head bowed,
she watched her feet step through the
shade of the few available trees, until she
was halted by an awareness of...of silence –
silence and a pair of hooves standing
in her path. The silence, she noted,
did not belong to the city; and the
hooves did not belong to a horse.

Continued.



9 CHICKWEED LANE

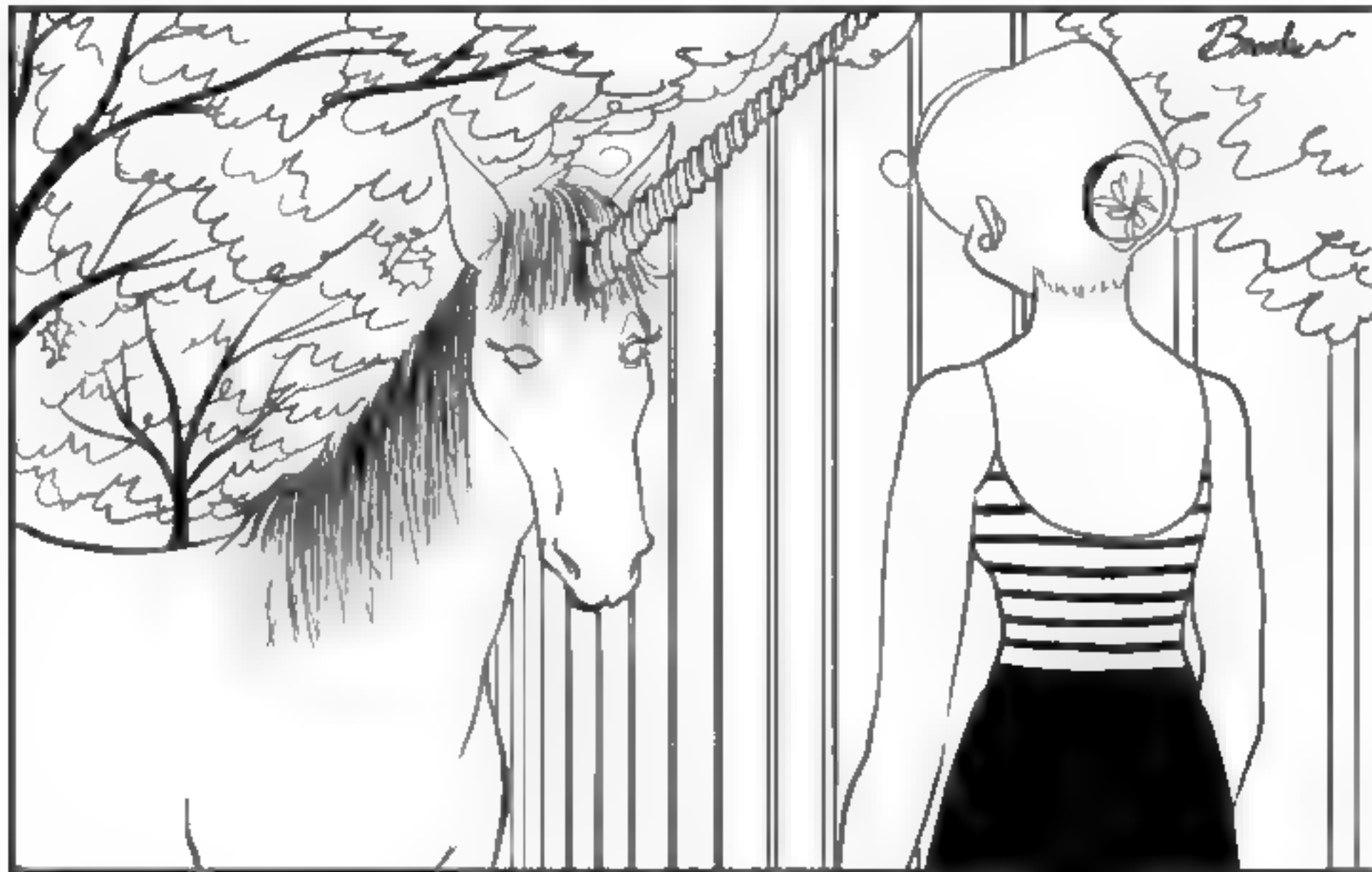




Edda looked up from the hooves – dark hooves belonging to white legs, like those of a Lipizzaner or Trakehner dressage horse, but shorter and more delicate. When her gaze finally settled on the animal's face, she started slightly. She started for two reasons: First, the creature said, "Are you just going to stand in my way?" in a deep, theatrical accent, somewhat British. "I have meetings to attend."

Second, a horn protruded from its brow, a long, tapering, helical horn.

Continued .



Edda looked in the creature's face, feeling, somehow, that to gape at the horn would be indelicate. The creature sighed impatiently.

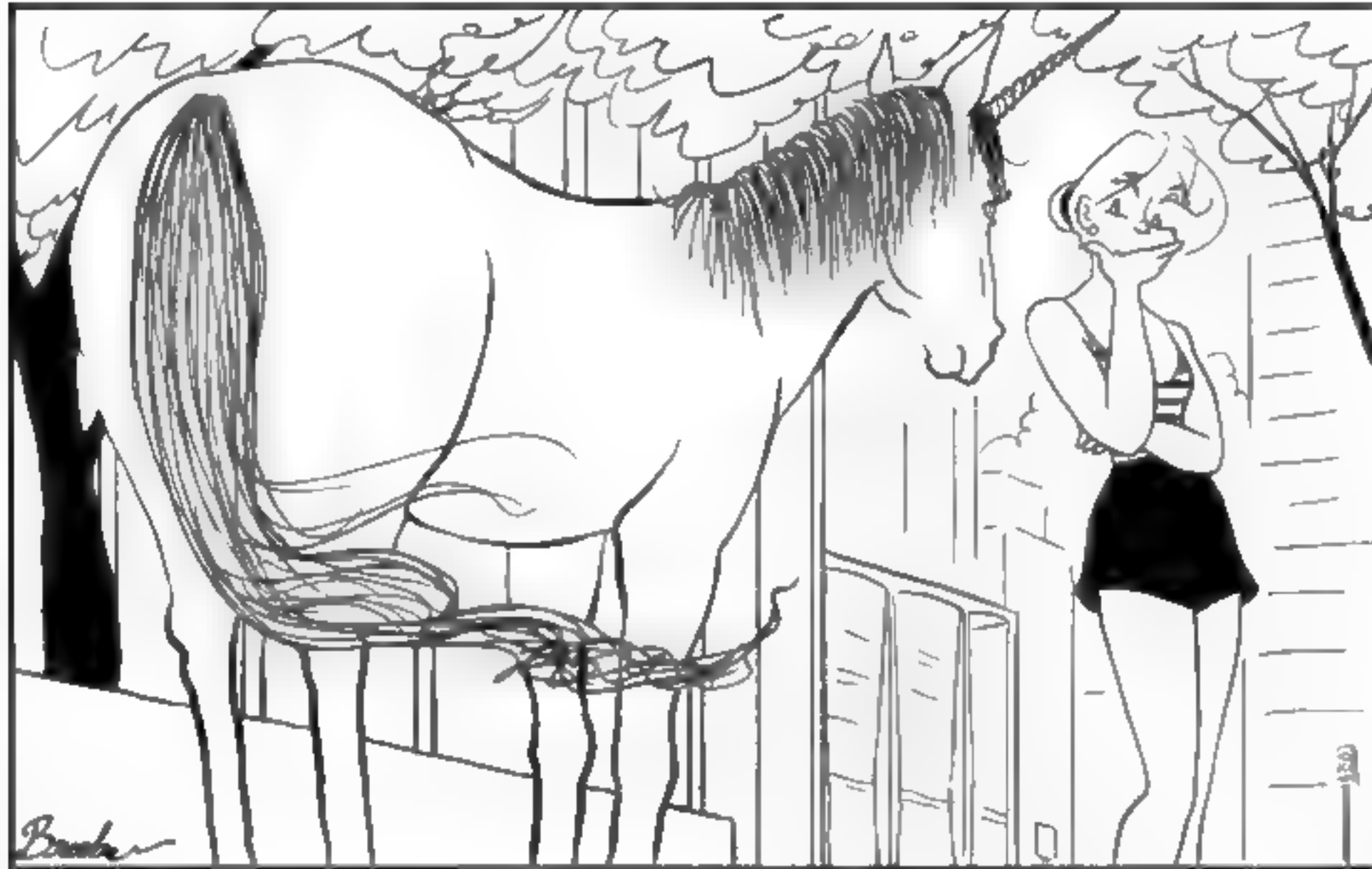
"I said," the voice intoned more slowly, with accentuated condescension, "are you just going to stand there?"

Edda goggled, astonished. "Your lips did not move."

The creature goggled back, revolted.

"Your lips did," it said.

Continued.



Edda stepped back and surveyed the animal – to which he said, “What...?”
“You don’t,” said Edda, “look like a goat at all.”
“And you,” he said, “don’t look like a Barbary ape.”
“I am not a Barbary ape,” said Edda.
“Could have fooled me,” he muttered.
“It’s just that I’ve heard,” said Edda, “of people making goats grow single horns like yours.”
The creature snorted. “What are people?” he said.
“I am,” said Edda. “That is to say, I’m a person.”
“And does this confer upon you the right to cruelly disfigure goats?” his voice sneered.
“Um, no,” said Edda.
“Hm,” said the creature.

Continued.



"May I ask," said Edda, "how I am hearing you, yet you do not appear to be speaking?"

"Yes, you may," said the creature, and he waited for her to ask it.

Edda looked at him for several seconds, and he looked at her for several more.

"Okay," said Edda, "if this keeps up, we're not going to be able to continue this conversation."

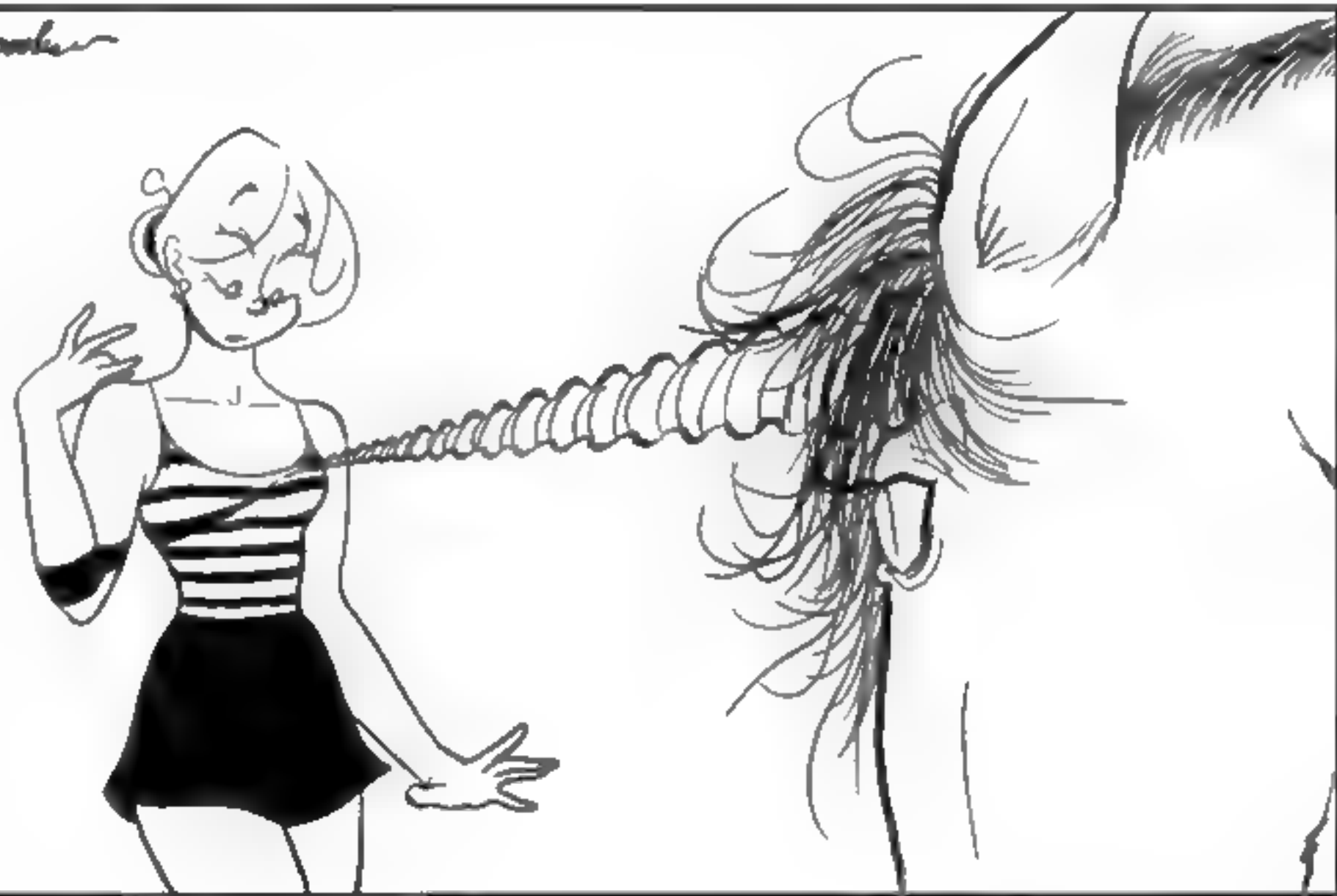
"Do you promise?" said the creature.

"Just tell me how I can hear you," said Edda.

"What do you think this is for?" said the creature, crossing his eyes slightly to glance up at his horn.

Continued.

Booker



Edda shifted with vague discomfort, looking around her at The Metropolitan Opera House and the plaza of Lincoln Center. She felt that somehow it would be impolite to ask, but she finally did. "What are you?"

"What do you mean, what am I?"

"I mean, are you a horse?"

The creature struck the pavement with a rear hoof.

"Do I look like a horse?" he said.

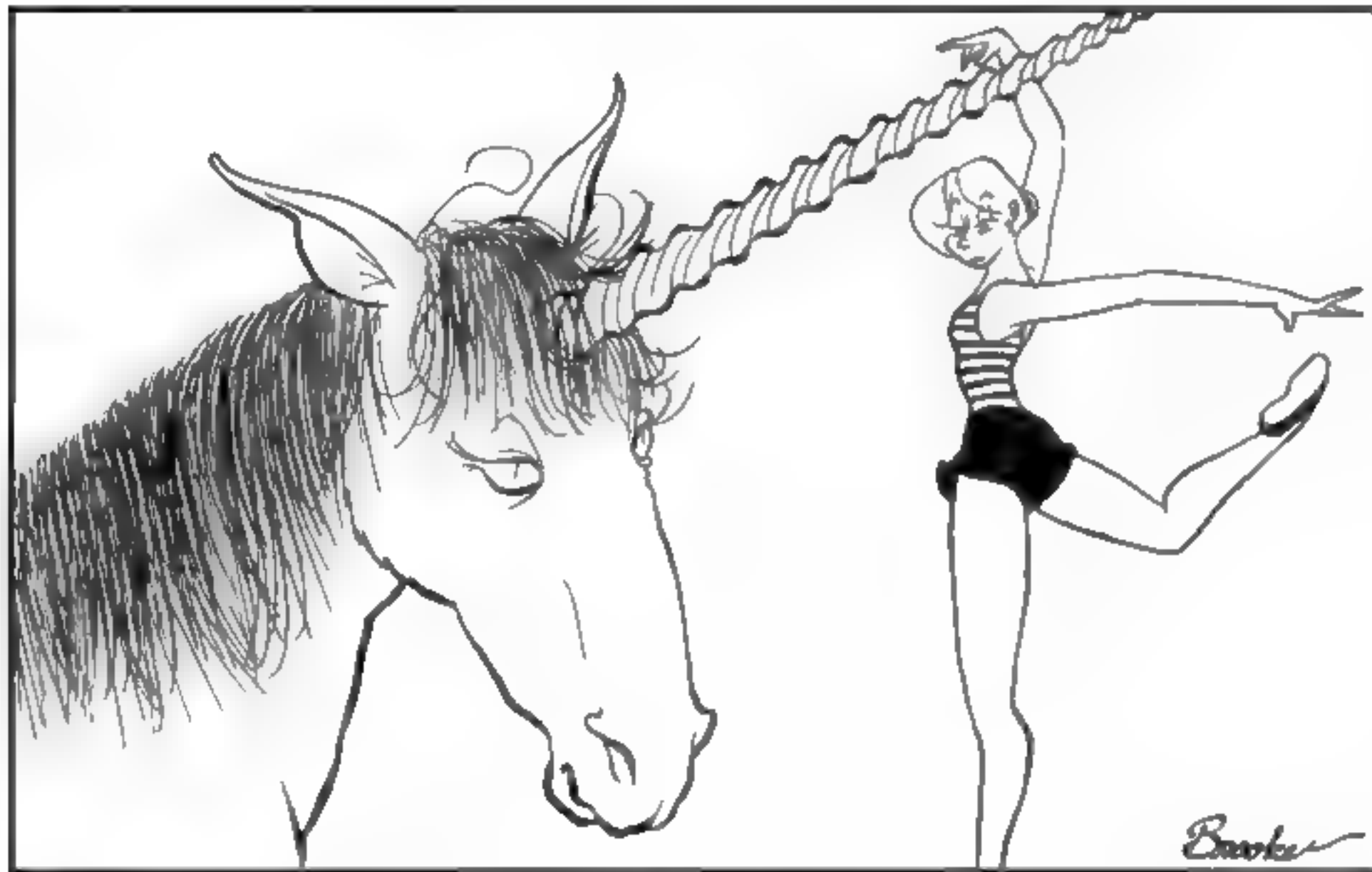
"Um...well...yes," she said.

"And what must you be?" he said nasally. "Some sort of speciesist trog?" He waited, but Edda ducked the barb. "I have meetings to attend," he said.

"It's the horn!" she blurted.

"What about it?" he said menacingly, pointing it at her heart.

Continued.



Considering respectfully the sharp tip, Edda said softly, "I only asked what you are." The creature turned its head to assess her with one, light blue, eye. "I will give you the benefit of doubt, and say you are not insulting, but just stupid."

Edda narrowed her eyes. "Vis-à-vis your question," he added, "I am a unicorn."

"Don't be absurd," Edda snapped. The unicorn tossed its head. "And what are you?"

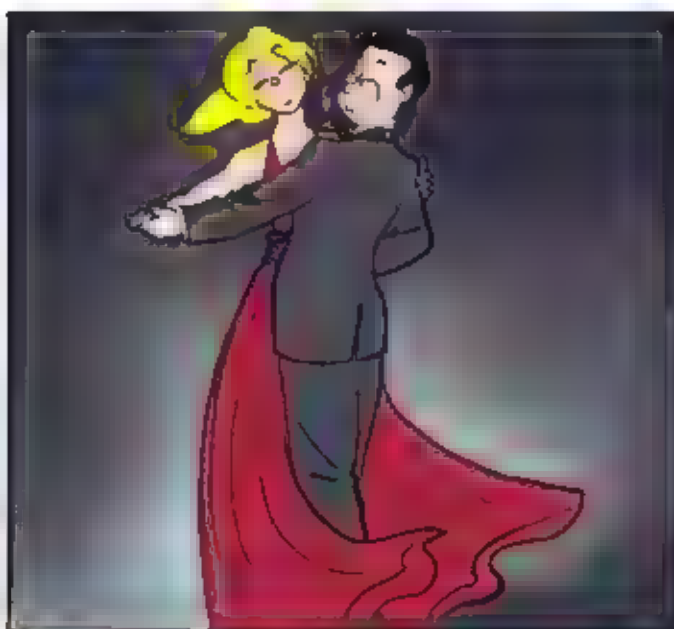
"I am a dancer," said Edda, with pride. "A what?"

"A dancer. People sit in a pit and play music while I move and tell stories with my body."

The unicorn switched its tail. "Don't be absurd," it snapped back.

Continued

9 CHICKWEED LANE



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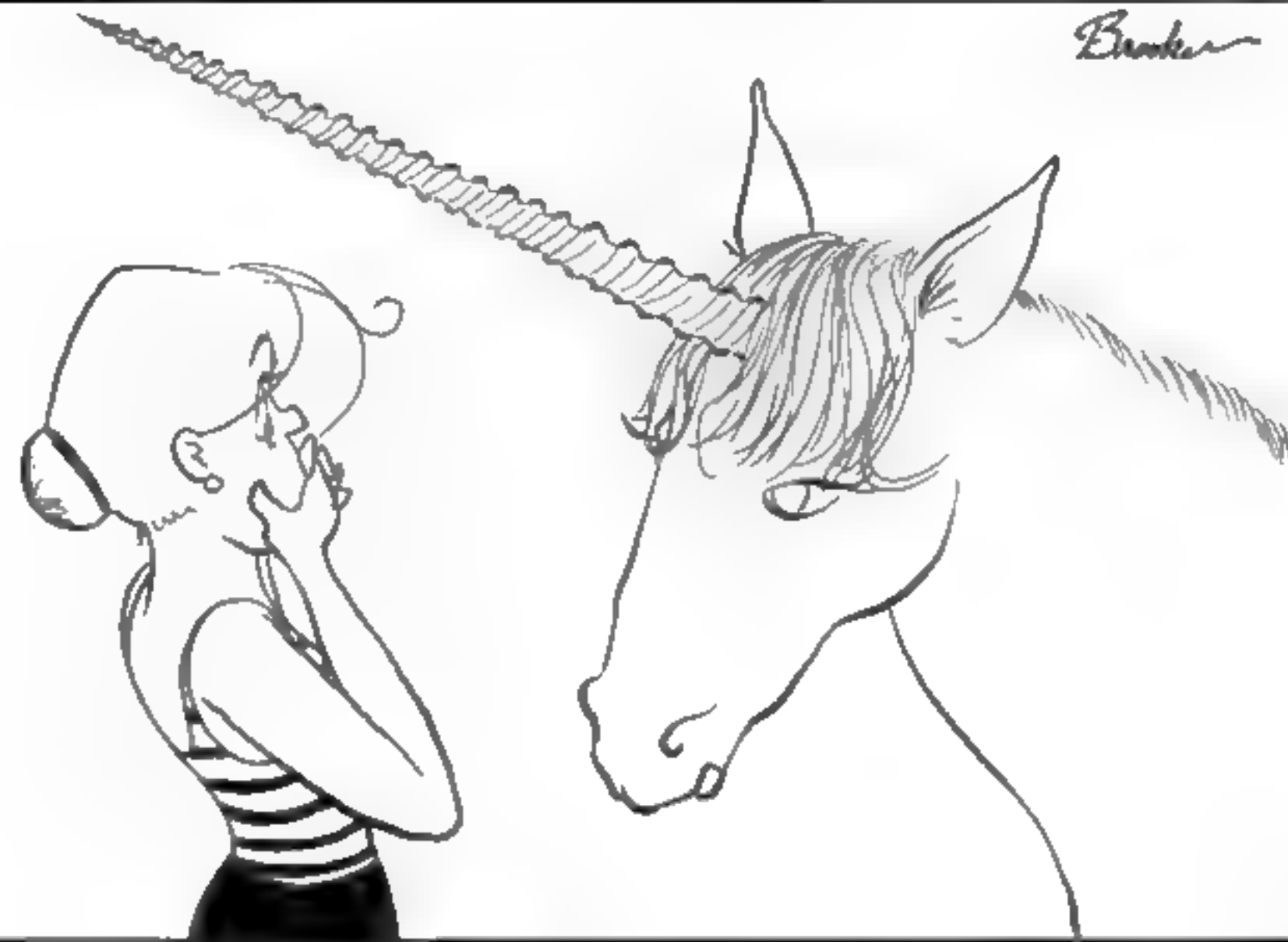


Barker



Edda confronted the unicorn stiffly. She did not like the idea that a mythological creature so preposterous as to have no foundation in science should call her absurd for being a dancer. The unicorn had also stiffened, for neither did he like being called absurd. He had his pride. "Plainly more pride than a dancer possesses, for I do not lower myself to telling stories with my body," he said. Edda stood very erect. "I beg your pardon." "Oops," said the unicorn insincerely. "Did I say that out loud?"

Continued.



A cloud of mutual disdain cast its shadow over both creatures, unicorn and dancer. Until now, Edda had thought of unicorns as wholly decorative. A unicorn with opinions especially opinions about her – seemed wanting.

“Decorative, eh?” said the unicorn.

“You read my thoughts!?” Edda whispered, aghast. The unicorn glanced up at its horn. “This thing receives as well as transmits.”

“Oh,” said Edda. “So I don’t actually need to use my voice or move my lips to communicate.”

“It is one of my fondest wishes,” said the unicorn.

Continued.



"There," said Edda, concentrating on keeping her mouth shut, letting her thoughts speak for her.

"Ah, much better," said the unicorn.

"I shouldn't want to make you watch my lips move."

"They are rather...simian."

"Is there any other part of me you find especially distressful to watch?"

"No. Just the lips, thank you."

"Well," said Edda, raising an eyebrow,

"only too happy to oblige."

"Most kind," said the unicorn.

They had arrived at the ultimate expression of mutual disdain: They were being scrupulously polite.

Continued . . .



The unicorn suddenly put its ears back and stared at Edda. "You want to **ride** me?!"

Edda's face went pink. "I didn't say anything!"

"No, but you thought it. I saw your vision. You pictured yourself astride my back, clip-clopping down Fifth Avenue."

"I...I'm sure I didn't..."

"Clip-clopping! And you actually included the sound effect of coconut shells!"

Edda crossed her arms over herself.

"You even had people point and smile."

"Well, I was just..." She looked around her. "Hey...
...Where is everyone?"

For the first time, she noticed that the entire plaza and the streets beyond were deserted.

Continued.

Edda turned her back to the unicorn and strained her ears. All was silence – no tread of shoes, no voices, no cars honking and rushing past. Not even a pigeon disrupted the stillness. The city was vacant, an army of mute buildings on abandoned streets. Edda was on the point of checking her hearing when a light breeze breathed through the leaves overhead.

“Where did the people go?”

“What?” said the unicorn.

She turned to repeat herself, but the unicorn had vanished. And just as quickly, Lincoln Center teemed with pedestrians, traffic gushed by, the city clamored again.

Continued



Later that day, Edda stood in Damrosch Park
with her boyfriend.

"I must have fallen asleep," she said uncertainly.

"Yes," he said, "That would make sense."

"I was tired," she pointed out.

"Yes, that would definitely make sense."

Impulsively, she put her arms around him, and he
responded in kind. "Do you think I'm okay?" she asked.

He held her close and said, with a true sense of
how lovely she felt when he held her close,

"You're just fine."

She looked into his face and, smiling, kissed him.

"Not with the lips again," she heard a familiar
voice say.

Continued



9 CHICKWEED LANE

INEXPRESSIBLY
DELICATE...

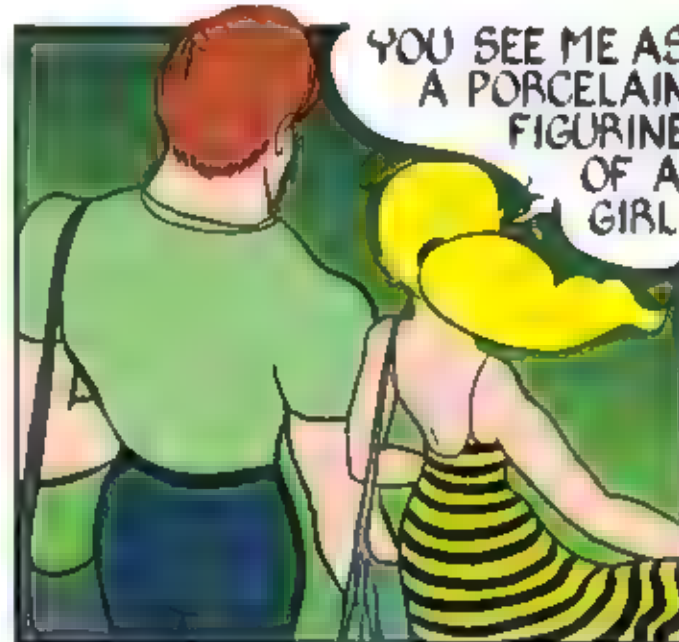


YOU SAY
YOU OBJECTIFY
ME. BUT YOU
OBJECTIFY
ME.

DON'T
MAKE ME
LAUGH.



YOU SEE ME AS
A PORCELAIN
FIGURINE
OF A GIRL.

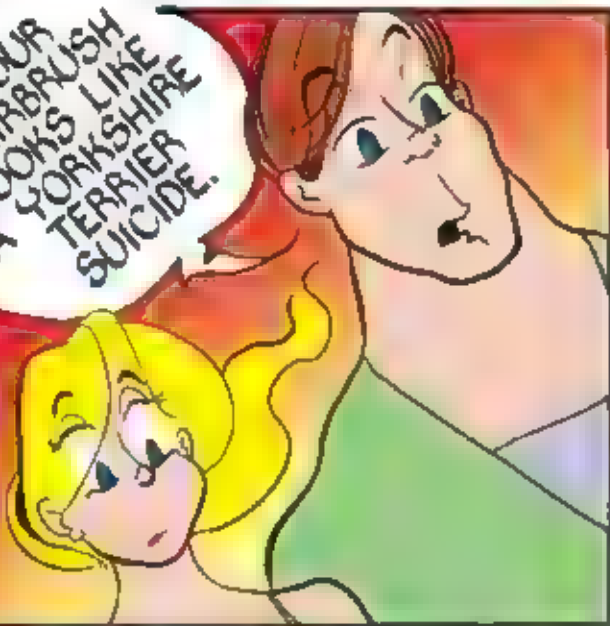


INEXPRESS-
IBLY,
DELICATELY
SO.



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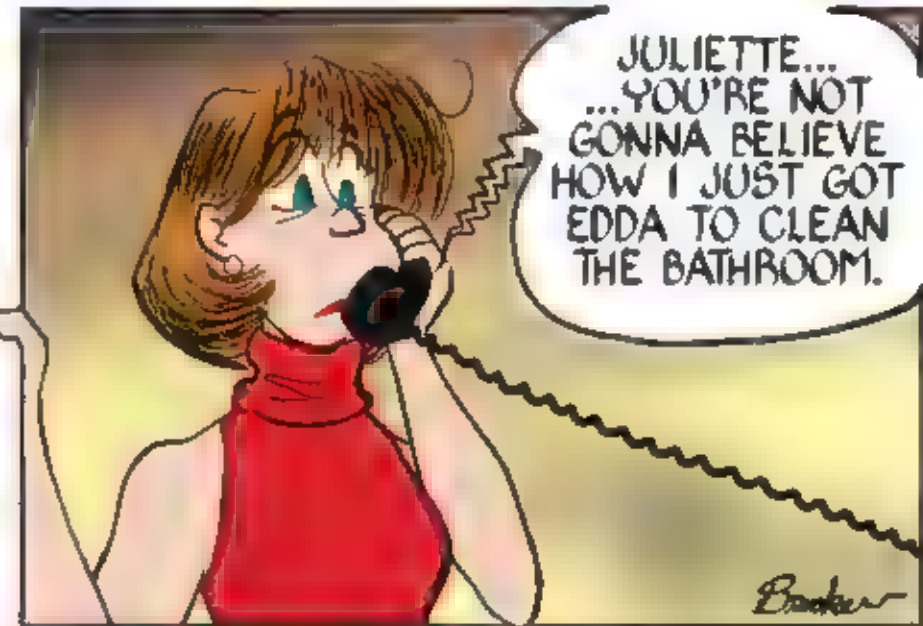
YOUR
HAIRBRUSH
LOOKS LIKE
A YORKSHIRE
TERRIER
SUICIDE.



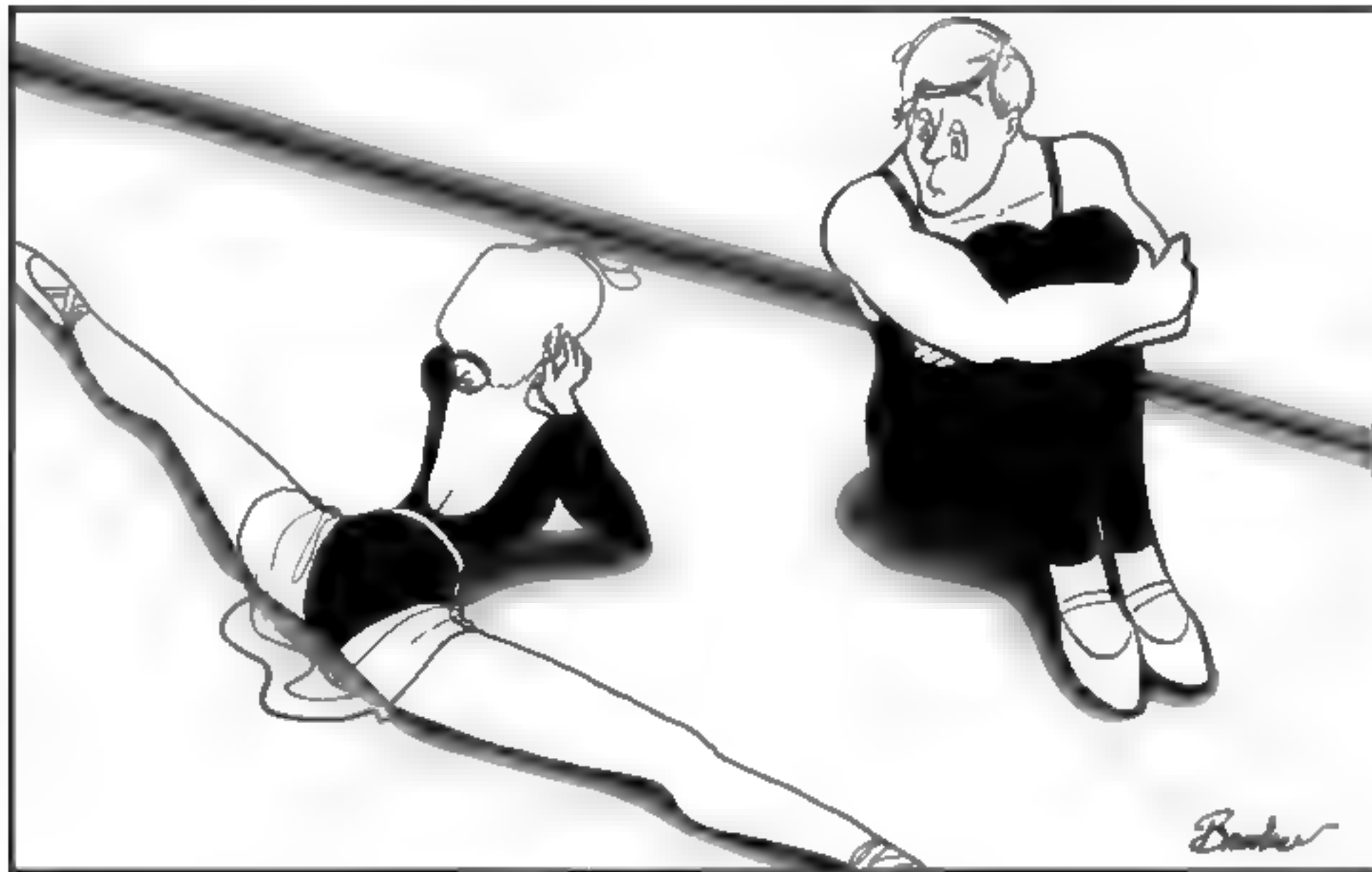
IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE TO
OBJECTIFY A WOMAN
WHO LEAVES AN
OBJECT THAT DISTURBING
PERCHED ON THE
EDGE OF A SINK.



JULIETTE...
...YOU'RE NOT
GONNA BELIEVE
HOW I JUST GOT
EDDA TO CLEAN
THE BATHROOM.



Booker



"The thing is," said Edda the next day, stretching during a break in rehearsal, "...the thing is..."

Seth, resting on the floor, looked at her, and waited. "The thing is'..." he prompted. Edda paused and looked down. She couldn't think of how to say what the thing was. "Does this have to do with the unicorn?" Seth asked.

"Did Amos tell you?!"

"Of course he told me. We talk," said Seth.

"I spoke to him in the strictest confidence!"

"You smeared lipstick over half his face. I don't think he interpreted that to be confidential."

"Do you..." she said quietly. "Do you think I'm crazy?"

Seth put a calming, affectionate hand on hers.

"Sweetie, I've always thought you were crazy."

Continued...



"I know when you're joking," said Edda uncertainly.

"Okay," said Seth.

"I know you don't think I'm crazy."

"Okay."

"But I did see a unicorn. And we spoke, not with our mouths, but through his horn, which is a kind of extrasensory transmitter/receiver."

Seth was silent just a beat too long for Edda's tastes.

"O-o-o-o-kay," he quietly answered.

"What do you mean by that?"

Seth looked at her and recalled Amos once saying that when she was little, she bit.

"Nothing," he said.

"...O-o-o-o-o-kay," said Edda.

Continued.



"I was just wondering if the unicorn represents a deep turmoil," said Edda, examining an orange at a fruit stand, "a crisis within."

"Meaning?" said Seth.

"A dilemma about who I am and what I do. People like us – actors, dancers, musicians, artists – we're not real to other people. Our lives aren't normal."

"Ah," said Seth.

"You probably don't understand a personal crisis."

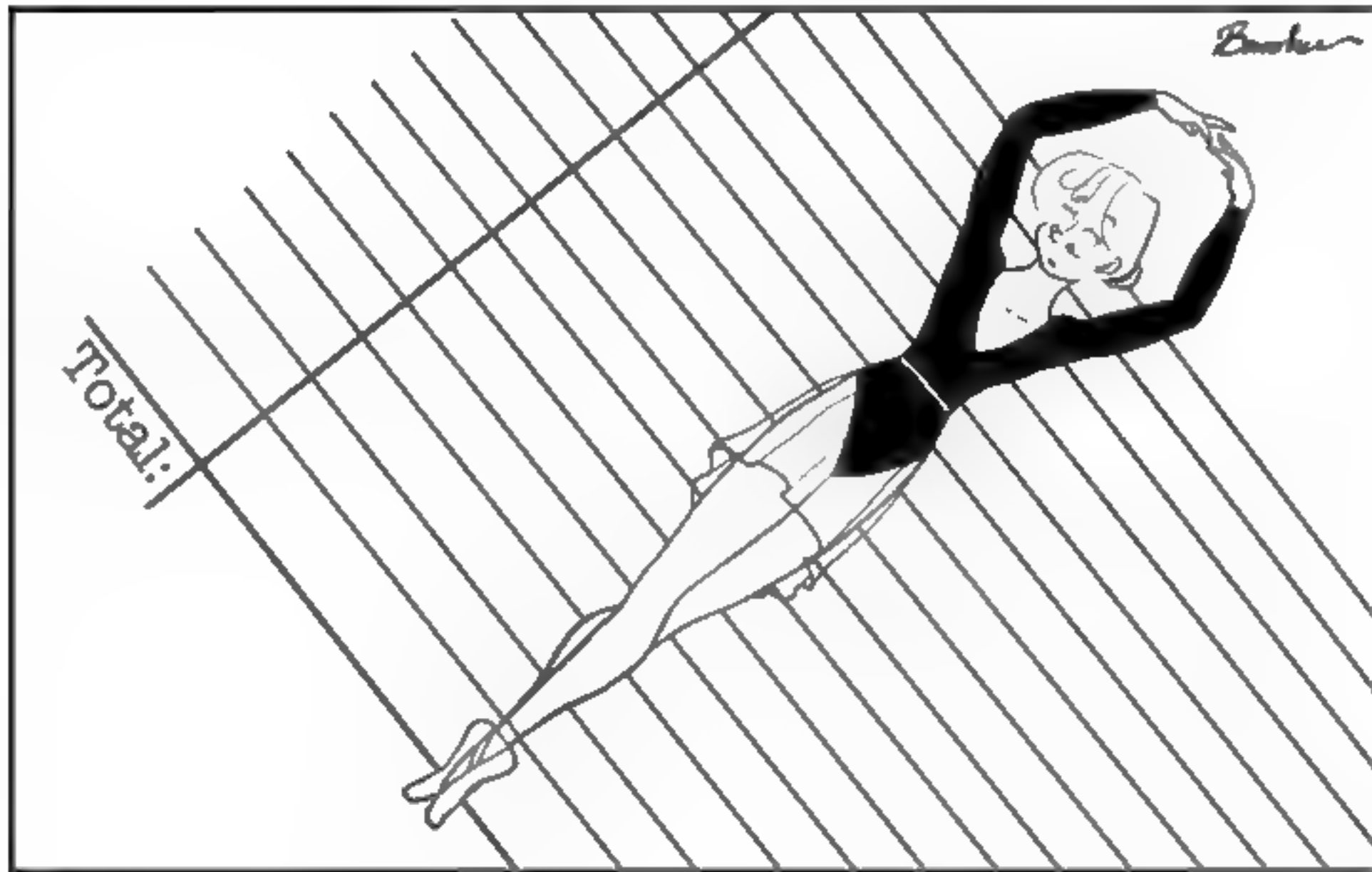
"Hm." Seth rubbed his chin. "Let's see...a gay, Texan Baptist with the physique of a linebacker, a career in a New York ballet company, three disconsolate former girlfriends and one disconsolate mother. ...No, I would never understand a personal crisis."

Continued.



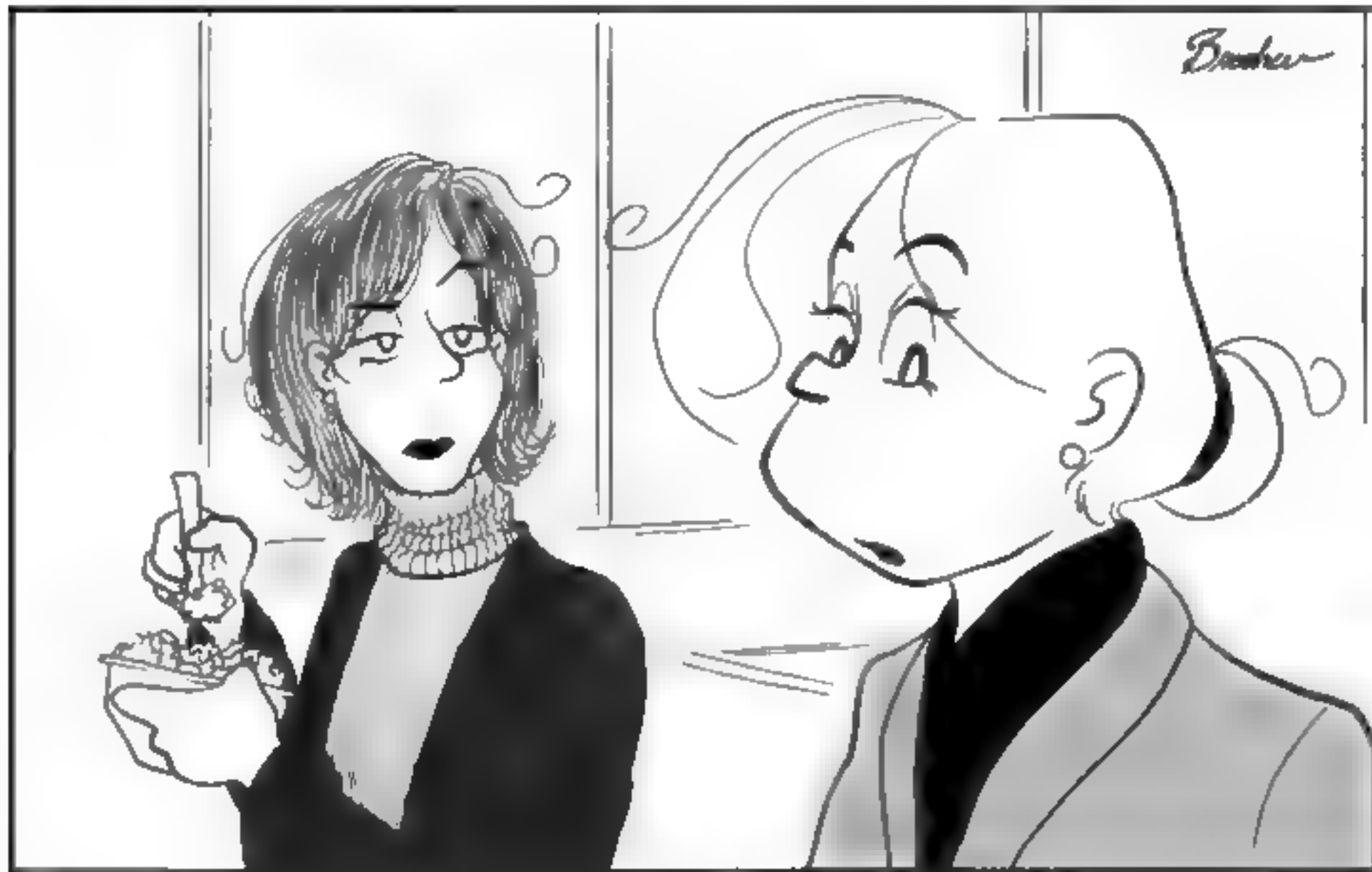
Walking down Fifth Avenue, Edda found herself in the precincts of 51st Street just as noontime arrived and a riptide of the upwardly mobile gushed from the office monoliths towering around her. Surrounded by the pinstriped and wingtip-shod, the high-heeled and the pantyhosed, she was caught up in the pace, the urgency, of the swirling shoals of humankind out on the prowl for lunch. And Edda had joined the predators.

Continued . . .



At 50th Street, Edda veered into Rockefeller Center where she sat among a pod of feeding executives. However, though she was in their midst, they did not recognize her. She lacked their coloration, their scent. They spoke past her – through her – to each other. They confabbed about acquisitions, about absorption, reorganization, sales; about opening their giant, serrate-toothed, corporate maws and swallowing smaller beings with smaller, blunter-toothed, corporate maws. Theirs was the real world, hard-nosed, important, unflinching. Hers lacked a bottom line.

Continued...



Edda's reverie was interrupted by a woman in a slate gray jacket and matching trousers, with shiny, lethal-looking shoes.

"I'm sorry," the woman said, crushing lettuce between her molars, "are you in development?"

"No," said Edda, somewhat ruefully. "I'm not very developed at all."

The woman blinked. "Oh."

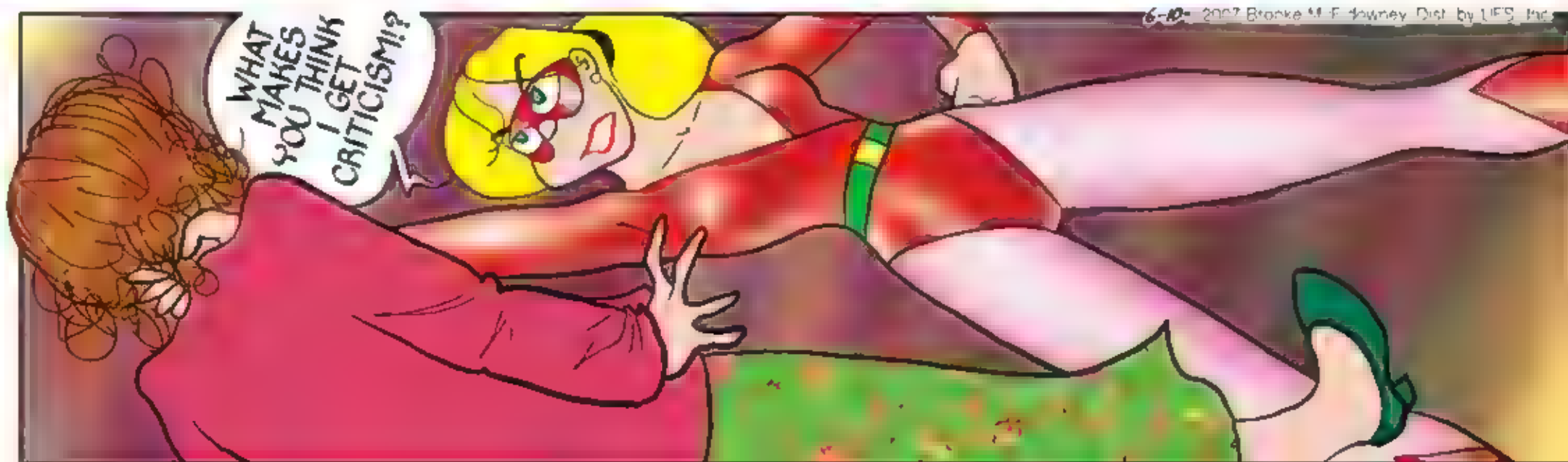
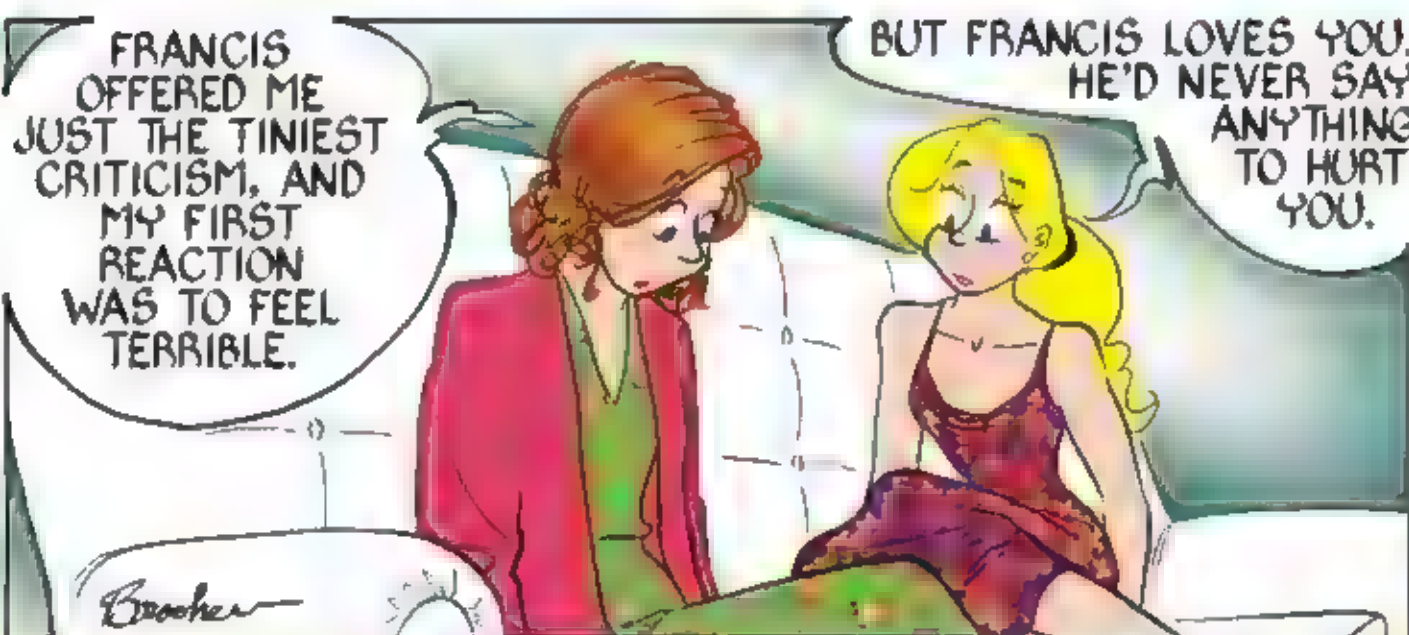
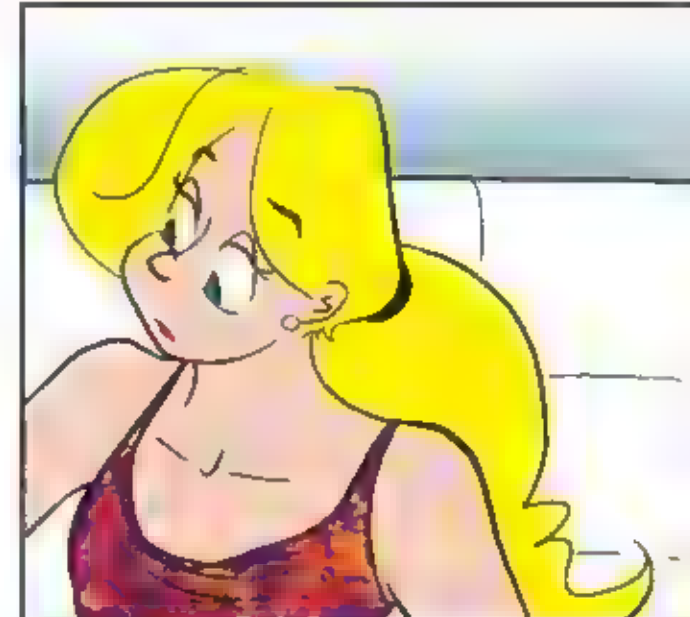
"I'm...I'm in lycra," Edda added.

"Ah," said the woman, crushing another shred of lettuce between her teeth, and looking at Edda as if she might have to be acquired, reorganized and sold.

Continued.

9 CHICKWEED LANE

®





The woman with the lethal shoes continued to stare at Edda, motionless except for the rhythmic gnashing of her teeth upon her salad. Feeling more and more examined and appraised, broken down and classified by the woman's eyes, Edda finally blurted, "I'm a dancer...
...in a ballet company."

The woman stopped chewing, paused and swallowed. "You're a ballet dancer?"

"Yes," said Edda.

Then the most extraordinary thing happened:
The woman smiled.

Continued.



“Really?!” said the woman.
Edda was astonished. Here, where she had been like a wraith passing among beings of substance, she was recognized. The woman wanted to know all about her, the name of her ballet company, how she came to join it, what she was performing presently. The woman was all attention and appreciation. Edda felt a warm rush of acceptance, admiration, even validation. She was not a firefly in a public mayonnaise jar; she was regular, living, breathing. A working stiff.

Continued . . .

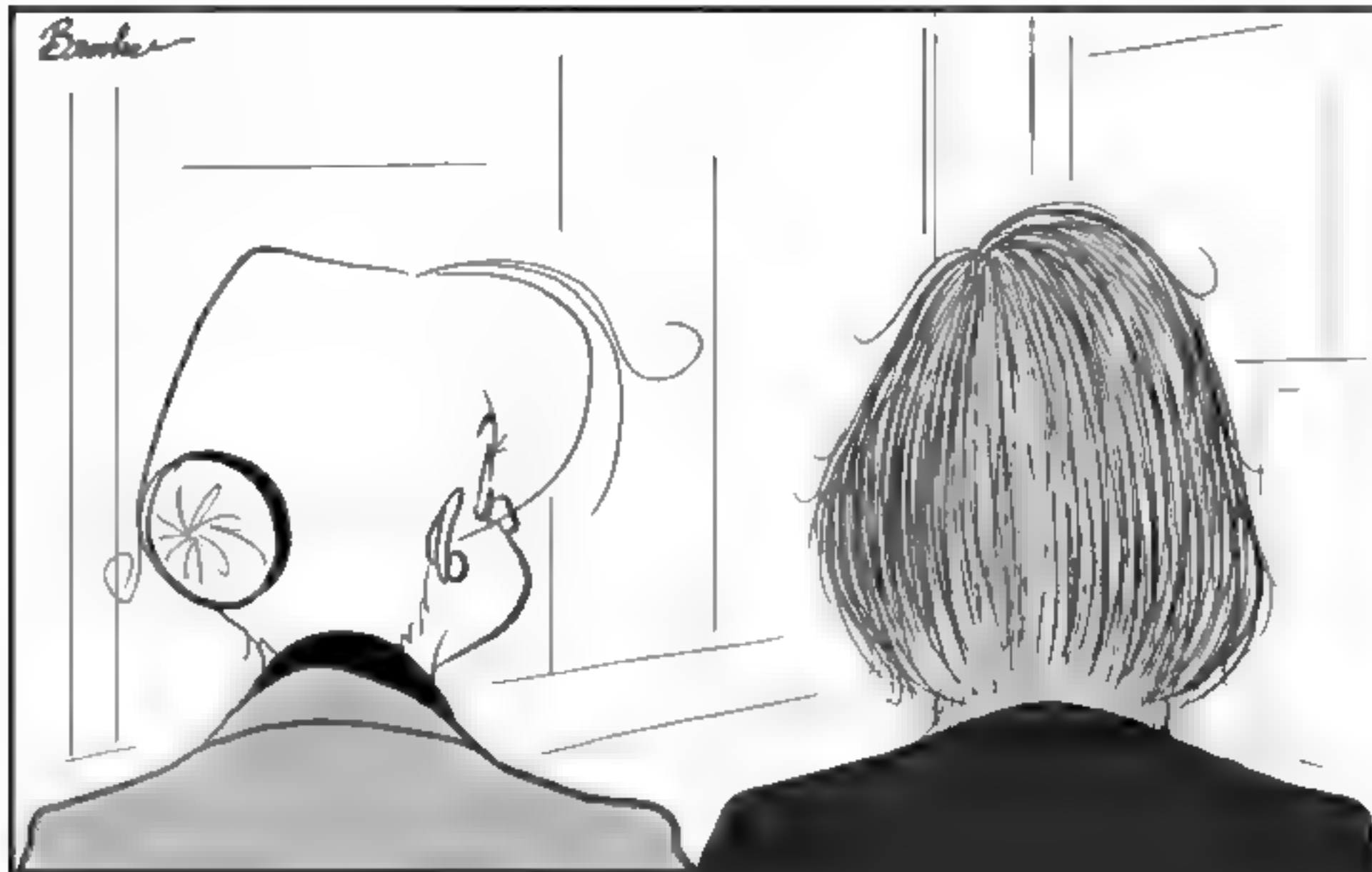


"I wanted to be a dancer, you know," said the woman in the lethal high heels. Edda did not know, but she considered the advisability of saying, "No, I don't know," to a woman in lethal high heels, and chose an appreciative, if bland, smile instead.

"I wish I'd tried harder." The woman looked at Edda with an expression of regret and longing; and Edda suddenly recognized in the woman's eyes the most soul-ravaging of emotions — envy.

It was a sad moment, a wistful moment, a moment that made Edda feel very, very good. With a supreme effort, she wrestled the smile from her lips.

Continued . . .



Edda strolled through the streets and walkways of Rockefeller Center and peeked discreetly at the woman with the lethal high heels. An expression of jealousy darkened the woman's face; deep feelings of discarded hopes, unrealized dreams, writhed and struggled. The unflinching world of bottom lines and corporate appetites cringed and coveted Edda's lot in life. The woman told Edda that now she is a vice president in charge of television ratings and scheduling.

"Wow," said Edda, feeling as if she had thrown the woman a bone.

Continued .



“Well,” said the woman in the lethal high heels,
“I’ve got to get back to work.”

“Yes,” said Edda, in quiet commiseration. “And I
have to get to a rehearsal.”

The woman shook Edda’s hand. “I’m glad
I met you. I really envy you.”

“Oh, don’t do that,” said Edda. *Go ahead, envy me,*
she thought.

“By the way,” said the woman, “What do you do
for a real job?”

Edda’s fingernails dug slightly into
the woman’s hand. “I operate a little boutique on
the Upper West Side – ‘*Enemas For Less.*’
Perhaps you’ve heard of it.”

And she walked away.

Continued . . .



Edda hoped her exit would be clean, silent, dramatically perfect. But the woman with the lethal shoes foiled it.

“Excuse me,” she said.

Edda sighed and turned.

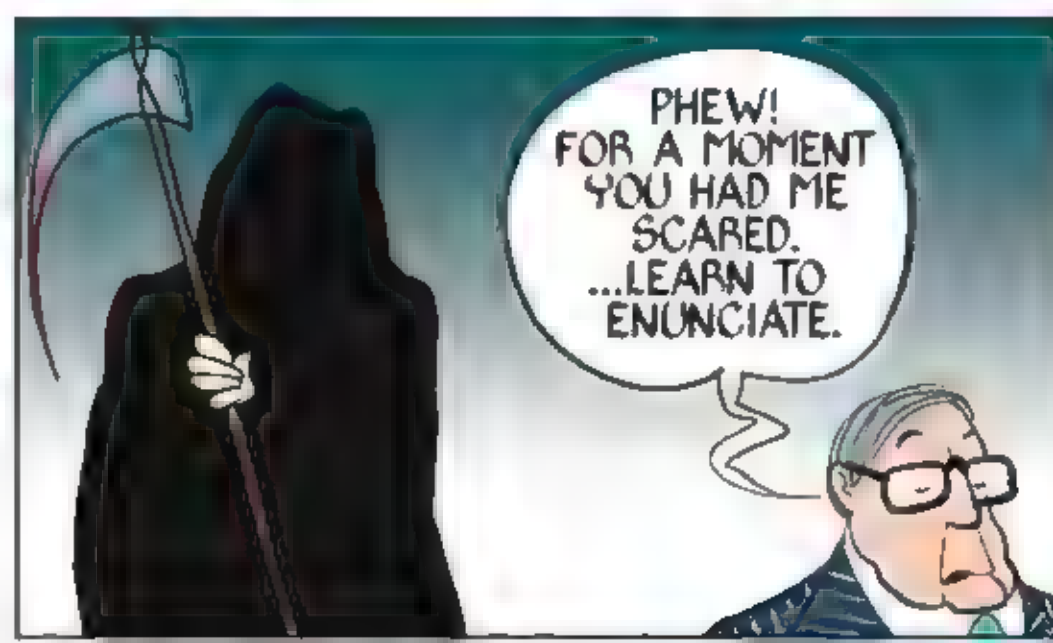
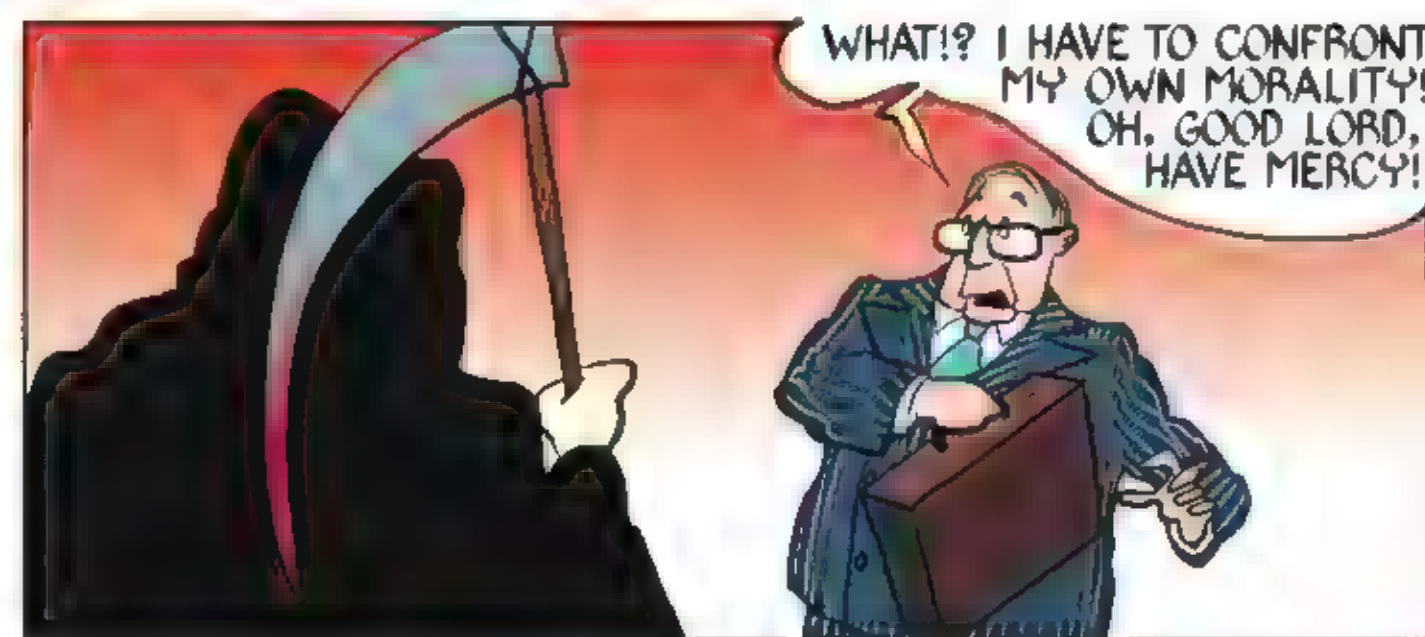
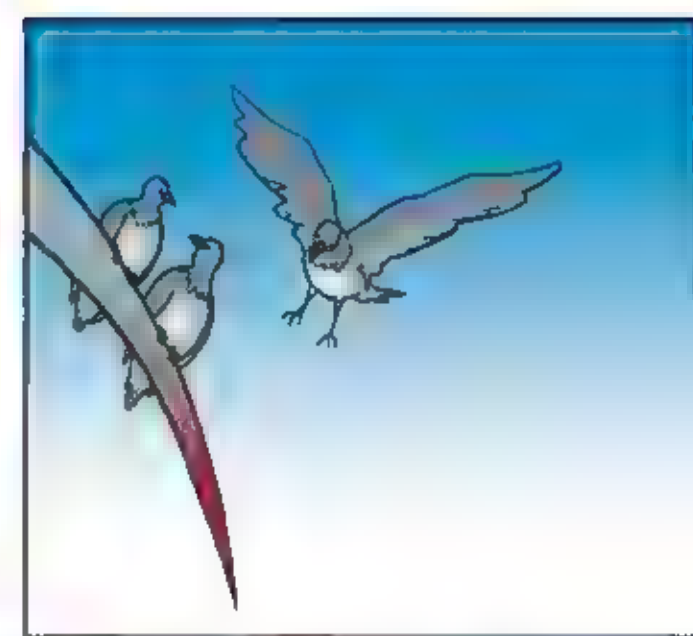
“Is that the best you can do?” said the woman, and a long, helical horn thrust abruptly from her brow. “You don’t even say hello?”

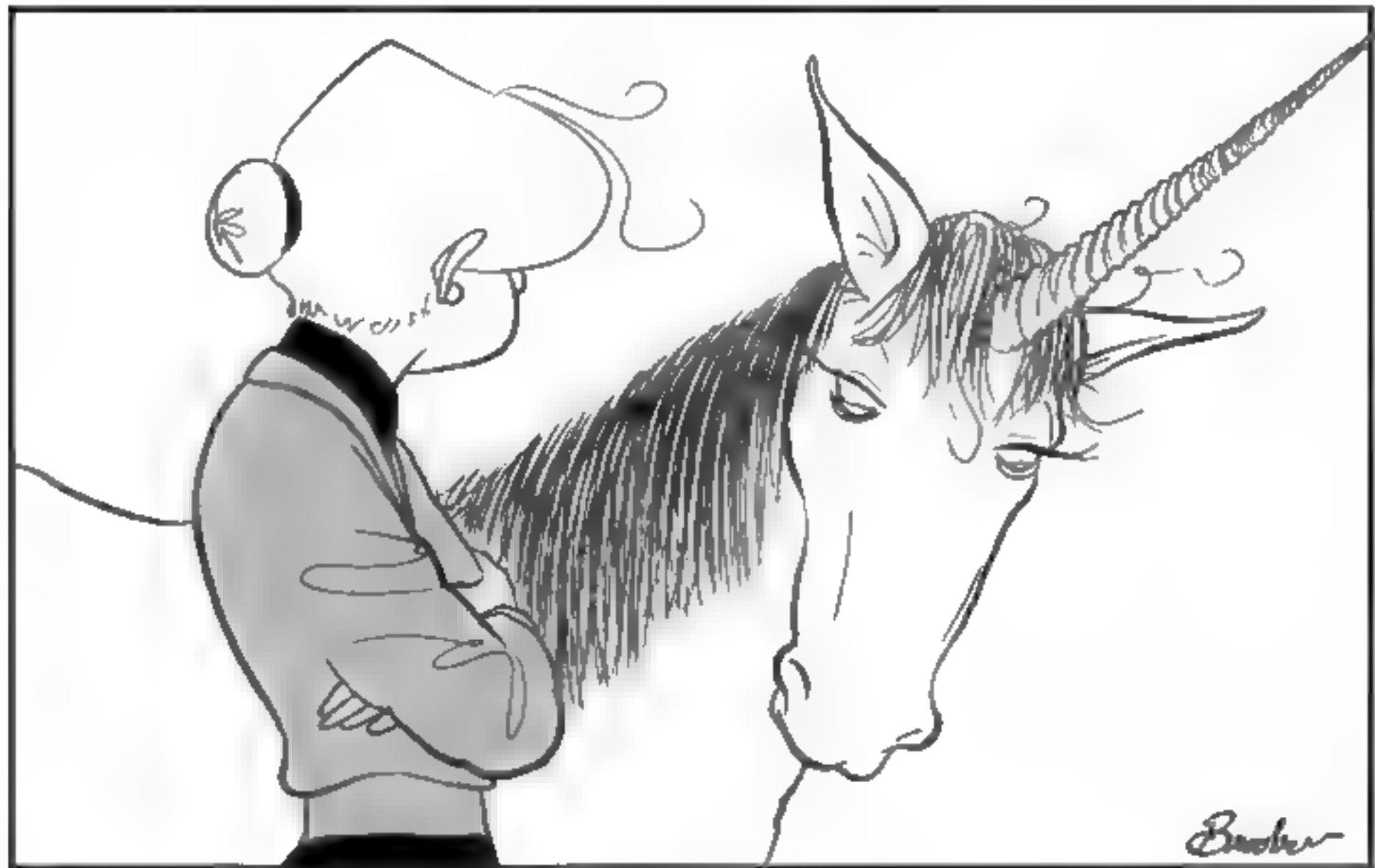
In another instant, the city was silent, Rockefeller Center was vacant, and the unicorn stood looking somewhat critically at Edda.

Continued . . .



I
DESPISE
PIGEONS.





"You again," said the unicorn, with a snort.

"You again," said Edda.

They looked around them at the vacant, silent plaza of Rockefeller Center. The unicorn returned his gaze to her and said, "No, I will not allow you to ride me."

Edda placed her hand on her heart. "I didn't say..."

"You didn't have to say. You were thinking it again. What is it with you and leaping on a person's back?"

Haven't you feet of your own?"

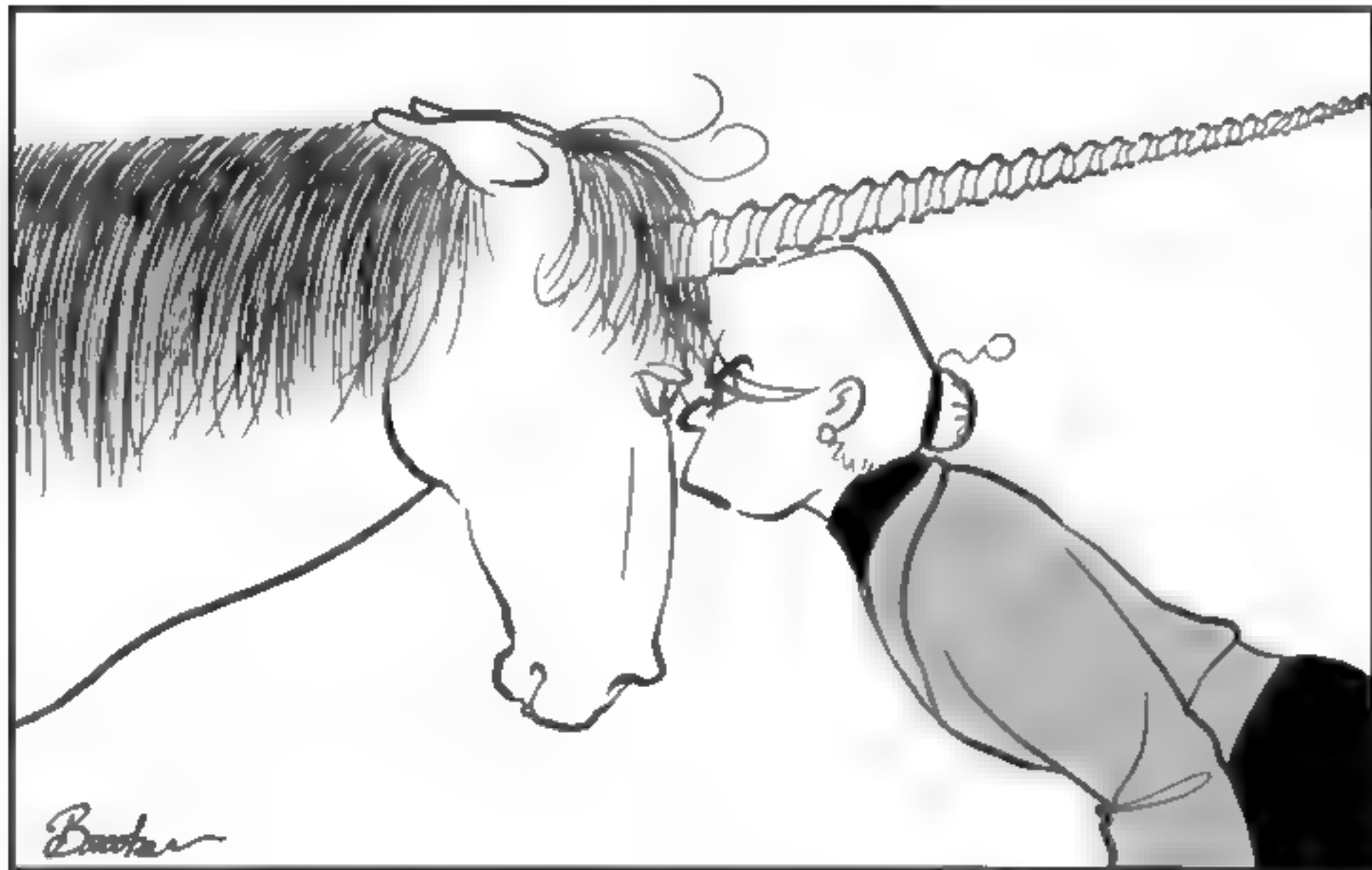
Edda's eyes narrowed. She didn't enjoy having her private ruminations tapped.

"Okay, unicorn," she said, "what am I thinking now?"

The unicorn narrowed his eyes back at her.

"Same to you."

Continued...



Edda had found her tête-à-tête with the unicorn disconcerting the first time. She had tried to ascribe it to poor sleep or to one particularly questionable egg salad sandwich. Grasping at straws though they were, these thoughts had consoled her until now. "An egg salad sandwich?!" said the unicorn derisively.

"Well...yes," said Edda.

"The hallucinogenic properties of which are beyond dispute."

"Okay, unicorn," said Edda, squaring her shoulders. "It's time to have this out."

"Bring it on!" said the unicorn.

They eyed each other.

"Why are you doing this to me?" they demanded in unison. A further pause occurred.

"What?" they asked, but more softly.

Continued.



"I'm not doing anything to you," the unicorn said heatedly. "You're doing this to me!"

"Don't be ridiculous," said Edda, wondering again about that egg salad sandwich.

"I was standing here," said the unicorn, "talking to a particularly odious minotaur when he vanished and you popped into view. What is it you *want*?"

"I was standing *here*," said Edda, "talking to a vice president of ratings and scheduling when she vanished and you materialized! Why won't you leave me alone?"

"Why don't you leave *me* alone!" said the unicorn, and he looked away gloomily. "It's bad enough," he muttered, "that the minotaur had to ask me what I do for a 'real job.'"

Continued . . .



“What did the minotaur say?” Edda said.
“He asked me,” said the unicorn with irritation, “what I do for a ‘*real job*.’ He didn’t think being a unicorn could possibly be actual, legitimate employment. I get that from every faun and pooka and centaur I run into. They all marvel at my horn and my milky coat. Among mythological beasts, I’m highly admired, even venerated. Then the question comes, without fail: ‘But what do you do for a *real job*?’ ”

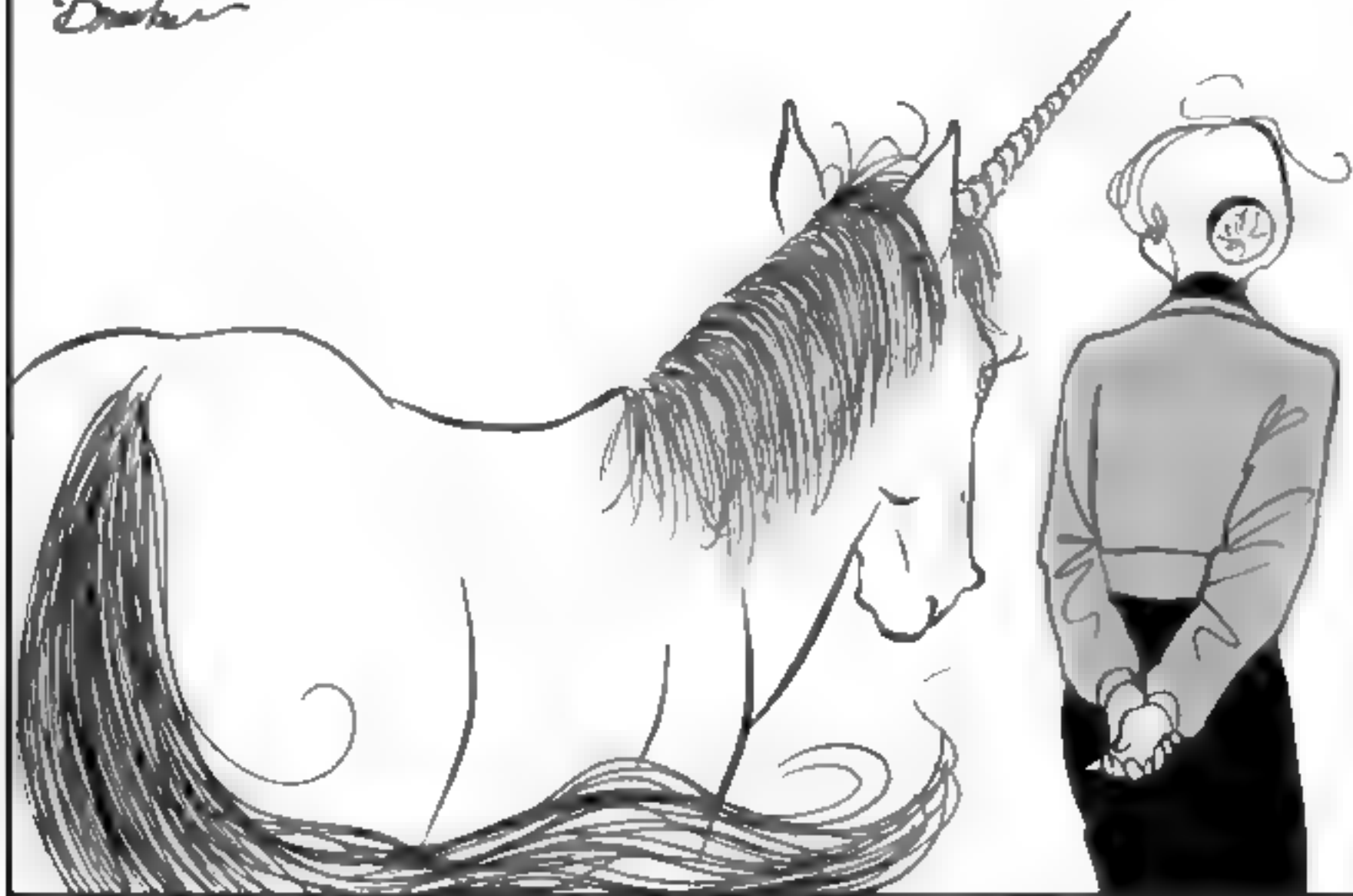
“That’s what the vice president of ratings and scheduling asked me,” said Edda. “And I zinged her.”
The unicorn was silent for a moment. “You did?”

“Zinged her good,” said Edda.

“What did you say?” the unicorn asked, for the first time in an almost friendly, conspiratorial way.

Continued...

Brooke



Edda regaled the unicorn with her catalogue of rejoinders to the invariable query as to what she does for a *real job*: “I plunder graves for footwear.” “I collect earwax for the poor.” “I spread Elizabethan diseases at Renaissance fairs.” “I sculpt the nasty body parts of the rich and famous out of lard.” And there was her personal favorite: “Seventy-five to life.”

The unicorn almost smiled.
“I shall have to remember those.”
“Please,” said Edda, “feel free.”

Continued...



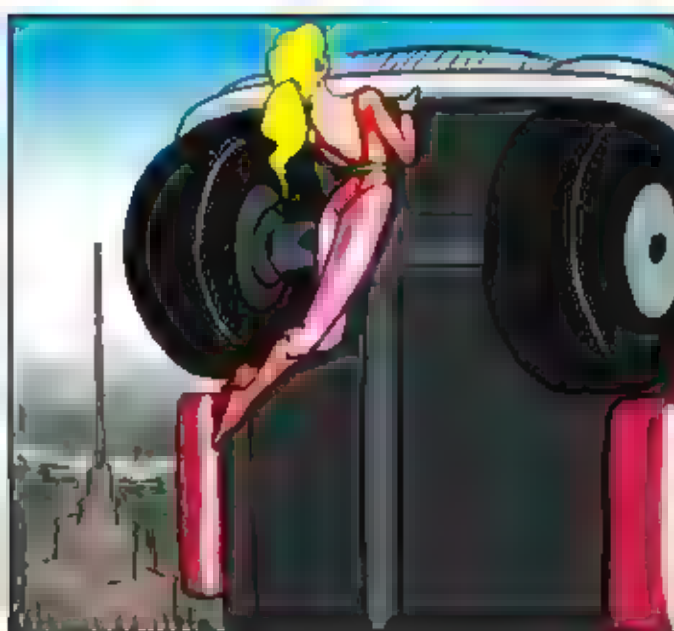
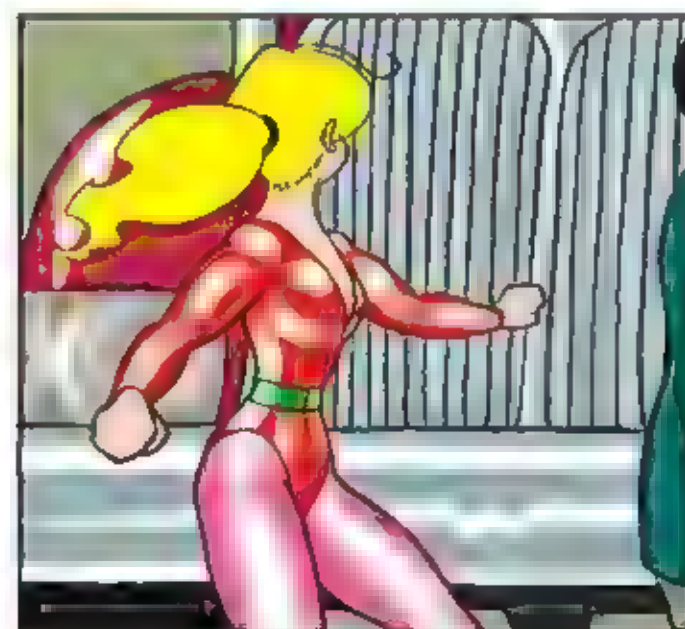
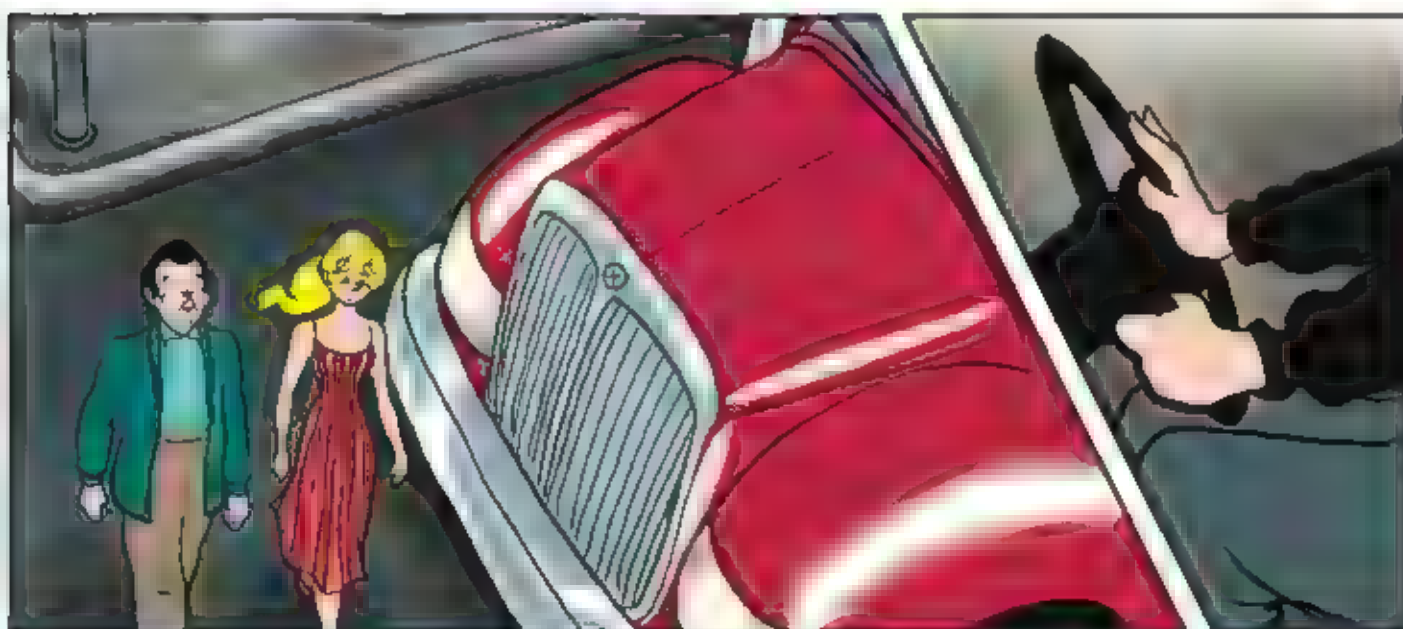
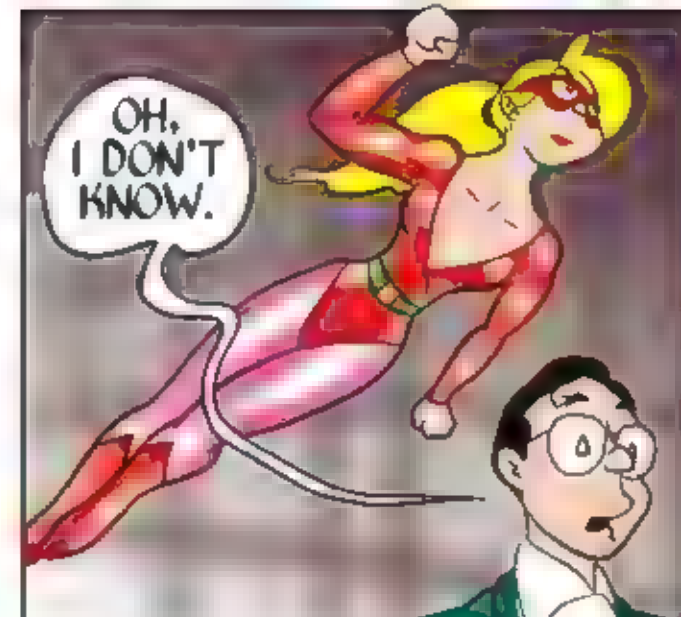
The unicorn and Edda looked at each other, drawn into their dimension of mutual other-reality by one reiterated question, and they sighed. "I guess among people," said Edda, "I'm a sort of unicorn."

"No," said the unicorn, "In the world of mythological super beasts and weird creatures, I'm a sort of ballet dancer."

They looked at each other – Edda at the radiant if acerbic unicorn, the unicorn at the delicate if sardonic dancer – and saw something of themselves that they never had noticed before. And they didn't mind it at all. In fact, they preferred it to recognition from their fellow creatures who had "real jobs."

"Would you," said the unicorn, "like a short ride down Fifth Avenue?"

Continued...



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Edda rode the unicorn along several blocks of Fifth Avenue, enjoying the silence, the soft wind, and the total absence of any other beings than themselves. Finally, as all good things must, the ride came to an end just outside Tiffany's.

"I guess it's time," said the unicorn,

"to get back to doing whatever it is I do."

"And I guess it's time," said Edda, dismounting, "to get back to doing whatever it is I do. Thank you for the ride. It was very smooth."

"And you were very light," said the unicorn, bowing, chivalric. At that instant, Fifth Avenue filled with a noontime crowd returning from lunch, and the unicorn was gone.

Continued.



Edda plied her way through the human surf crashing against the buildings around her – past the women and men who daily made the world coil and writhe like a great, profitable beast. By contrast, all Edda did was tell stories with her body. To these people, hers was not a real job.

“But,” a familiar voice seemed to whisper in her ear, “would you have it any other way?”

“Don’t be absurd,” she smiled, and departed.

“What did that girl say?” asked one high-ranking corporate predator, poised to swallow up another high-ranking corporate predator over lunch. The other high-ranking predator said, “I think it was, ‘Don’t be absurd.’” They both laughed insincerely and turned away to perform their life struggle.

Edda went on to dance.



STUDENTS WILL
NOT CALL ME BY
MY GIVEN NAME.
YOU WILL ADDRESS
ME AS DR. BURBER.
WITHOUT FAIL.



Burber

THAT'S IT? JUST AN EDICT?
CAN'T YOU ADD SOME
COMPELLING REASON TO
CLARIFY WHY WE SHOULD?



IF YOU KNOW
WHAT'S GOOD
FOR YOU.

A LOT OF US THINK HER
POLICY IS ELITIST
AND ANTIQUATED.
STUDENTS AND
FACULTY SHOULD
BE ON A FIRST-
NAME BASIS.
WE SHOULD
BE ALLOWED
TO ADDRESS
DR. BURBER
IN THE SAME
WAY THE
TRUSTEES
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
ADDRESS
HER.

Brooke



SOVEREIGN.



CONSIDER
YOURSELVES
LUCKY.



TO ADD HER VIEWS ABOUT FAMILIARITY BETWEEN STUDENTS AND FACULTY, I HAVE BROUGHT A PERSON WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO ADDRESS ME BY MY GIVEN NAME, AND WHO, BY COINCIDENCE, GAVE IT TO ME.



SOME OF YOU BELIEVE YOU SHOULD ADDRESS MY DAUGHTER AS I DO, BY HER FIRST NAME. THIS IS AN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION, NOT A FAMILIAL ONE. DR. BURBER IS A RECOGNIZED EXPERT IN A SUBJECT



THE SURFACE OF WHICH YOU HAVE YET TO SCRATCH. SHE IS YOUR MASTER IN THIS CLASSROOM, YOUR SUPERIOR OUTSIDE, AND IS TO BE ADDRESSED ACCORDINGLY...

...BY HER PEDAGOGICAL HONORIFIC, AS BEFITS HER STATURE IN THIS UNIVERSITY AND THE TRADITIONS OF ACADEME. ANYTHING ELSE WOULD BE DISGRACEFUL.

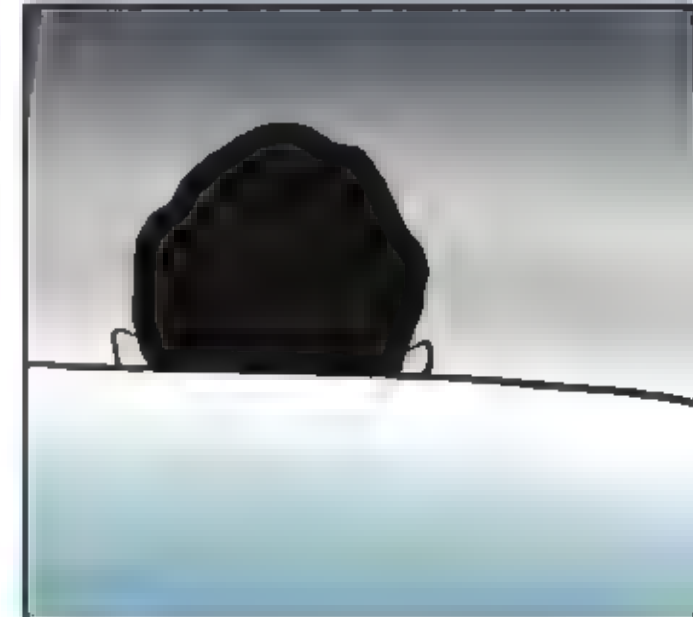
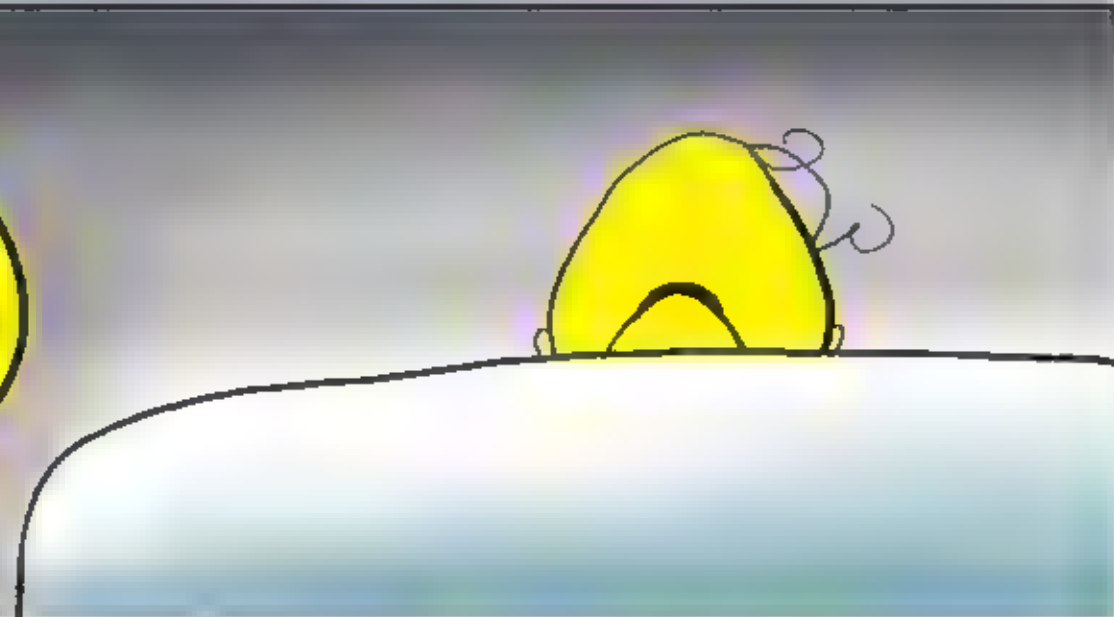


THANK YOU, MOTHER.

BE QUIET, DUCKS, I'M NOT FINISHED...I THINK IT WAS GEORGE BERNARD SHAW WHO SAID...



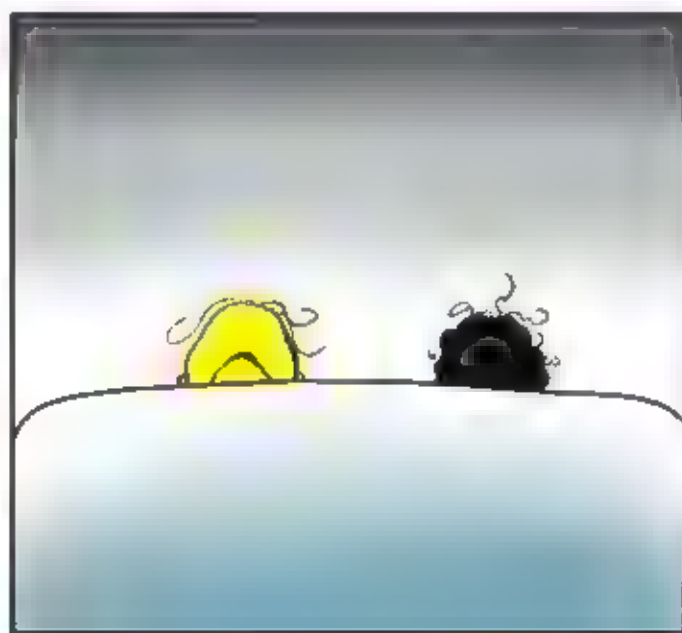
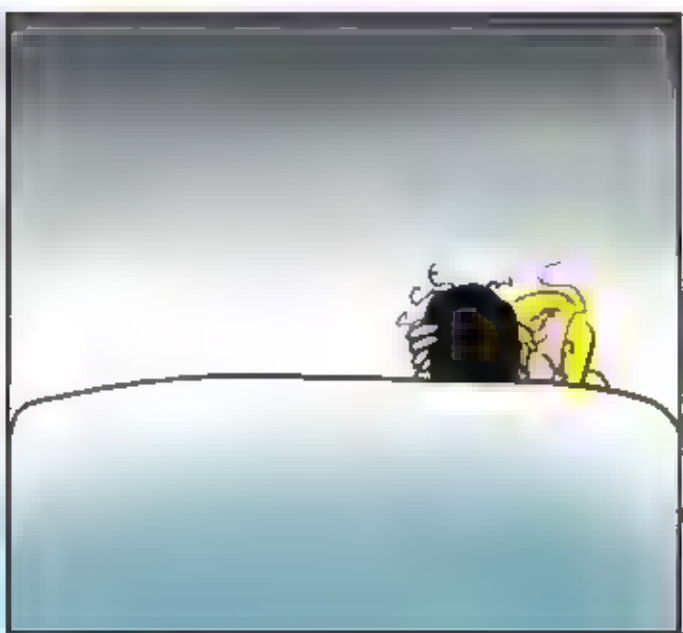
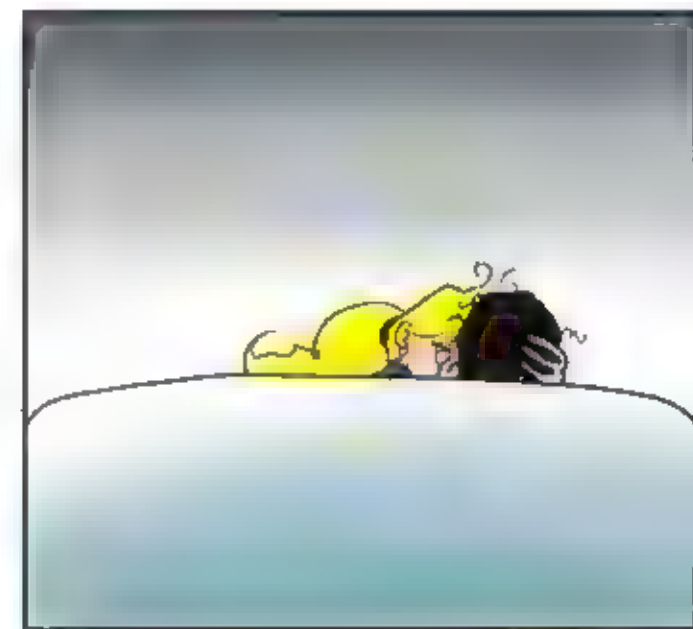
9 CHICKWEED LANE



SOMETIMES, I JUST PRATTLE
ON TOO MUCH. I NEED TO
LEARN HOW TO KEEP MY
MOUTH SHUT...



NO...YOU MISTOOK
MY MEANING. WHAT I'M
SAYING IS, I NEED TO KNOW
HOW TO HOLD MY TONGUE...



ON THE OTHER HAND,
YOUR THESIS IS VERY
CONVINCING. I COULD
BE SWAYED.



SO TELL ME,
FRANCIS, HOW
DOES SECULAR
LIFE AGREE
WITH YOU?

JUST A
SECOND,
FATHER...
...I'VE
SOME-
THING TO
ATTEND
TO.

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OH, I'M
MUDDLING
THROUGH.

WIPE
YOUR
MOUTH,
LAD.



EDDA INSISTED I BUY THIS
SUMMER DRESS. BUT I JUST
WONDERED WHAT YOU
HONESTLY
THINK?

...I
...UM...
...ER...

AMOS,
I SEEK
A LITTLE
ADVICE...

I SEE...
...WELL,
GIVEN THE
PARTIC-
ULARS...

"HUBBA
HUBBA."

FRANCIS SAW DIANE IN A REALLY
SUCCULENT-LOOKING
DRESS I
CONVINCED
HER TO
BUY...

...AND WAS SO
TONGUE-TIED,
HE ASKED AMOS
FOR ADVICE ON
WHAT TO SAY.

I'LL
BE
RIGHT
BACK.

EXCUSE ME A SECOND,
DIANE.
I NEED TO
BORROW
FRANCIS.

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Barker

YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT
TO SAY TO DIANE
BECAUSE SHE WAS
WEARING A PRETTY
DRESS, SO YOU
CONSULTED
AMOS...
ARE YOU
INSANE?!

I CANNOT CONDUCT
A RATIONAL
CONVERSATION
WHILE YOU
HOLD ME
LIKE A
STALE
BAGUETTE.
PUT ME
DOWN
FIRST!

Brooke

ALL RIGHT, THEN. WHAT DID
YOU SAY TO DIANE
BASED ON AMOS'
ADVICE?

"HUBBA
HUBBA."

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YOU SAW DIANE IN A NEW DRESS AND ALL YOU COULD SAY WAS, "HUBBA HUBBA"?

WHAT SHOULD I HAVE SAID?

Brooke

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HOW ABOUT, "I HAVE NEVER BEHELD SUCH A RAVISHING SIGHT. YOU ARE MORE THAN JUST LOVELY...YOU ARE BREATHTAKING."

WHERE DID AMOS GET THE IDEA THAT "HUBBA HUBBA" IS WHAT WOMEN WANT TO HEAR?



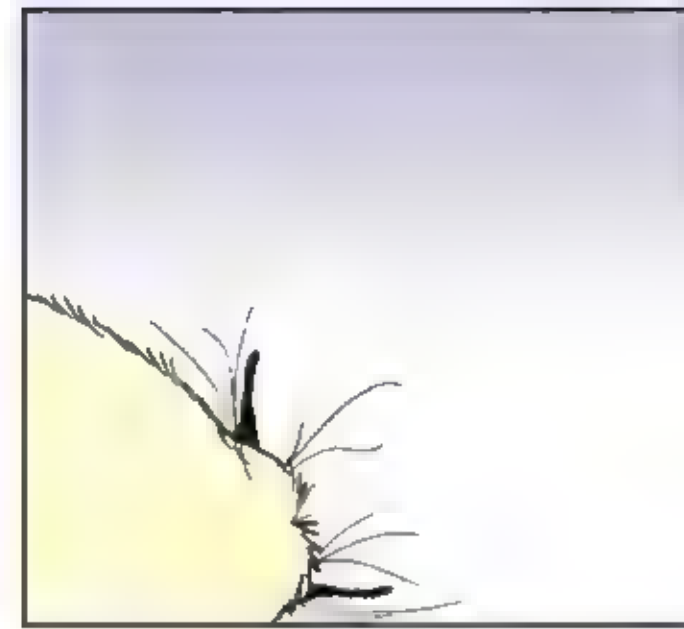
THANKS FOR HELPING ME TALK
TO DIANE. I DIDN'T THINK YOU
WENT IN FOR...WELL...YOU KNOW...
...ROMANTIC GUIDANCE BETWEEN...
YOU KNOW...
A MAN AND
A WOMAN.

WHY? BECAUSE
I'M GAY?
WHAT DO
YOU THINK
WE ARE,
THE ANTI-
TRUE LOVE
LEAGUE?

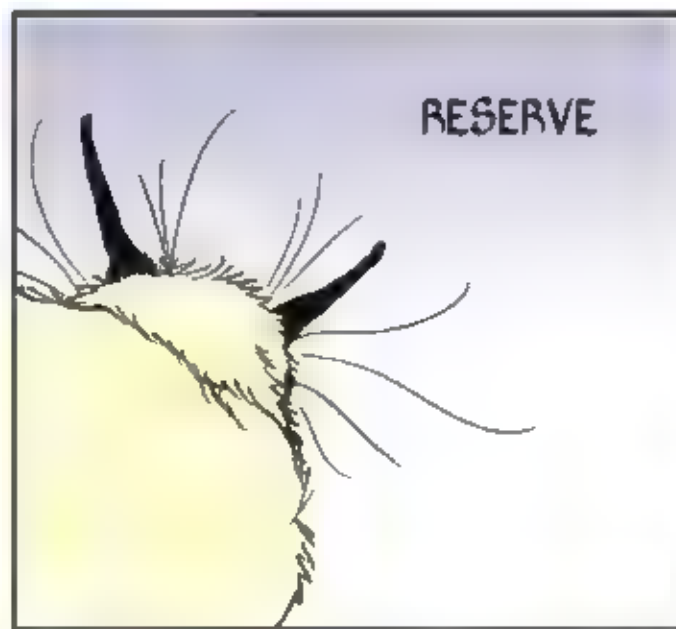
I SUPPOSE, WHEN I WAS
A PRIEST, THAT'S
EXACTLY WHAT
I THOUGHT
YOU GUYS
WERE.

I SUPPOSE, WHEN YOU
WERE A PRIEST, THAT'S
EXACTLY WHAT I THOUGHT
YOU GUYS
WERE.

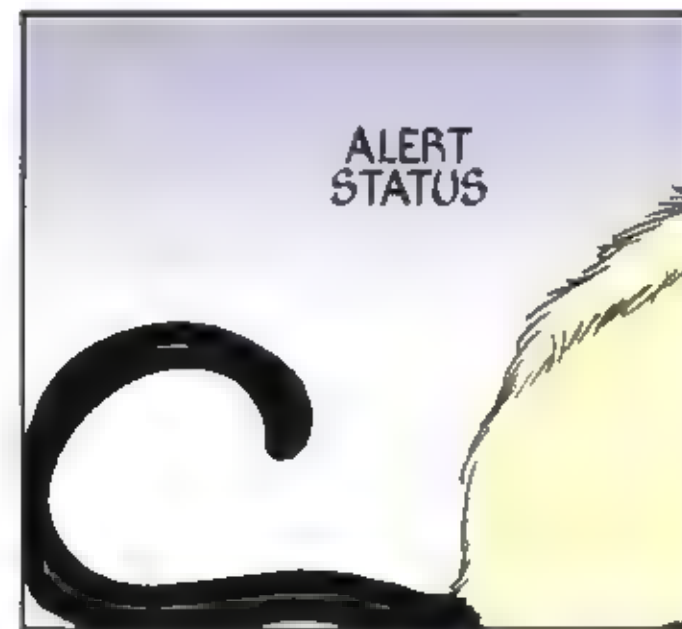
Booker



CAT
READINESS

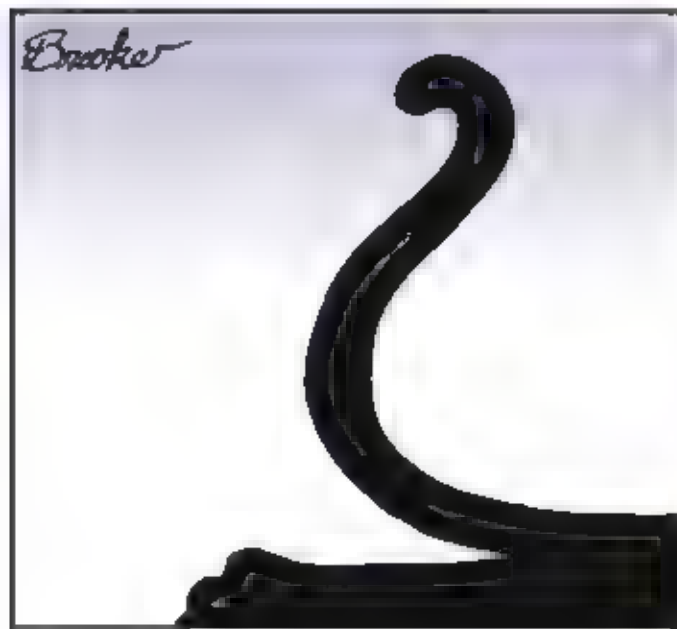


RESERVE

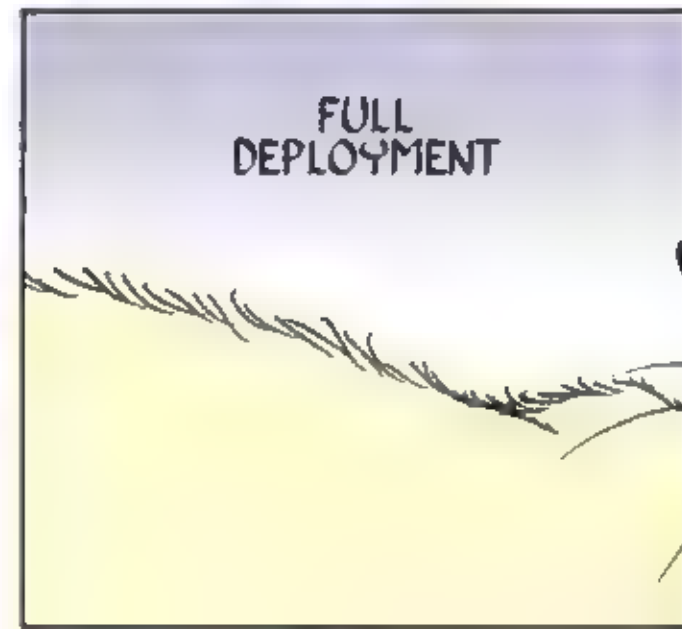


ALERT
STATUS

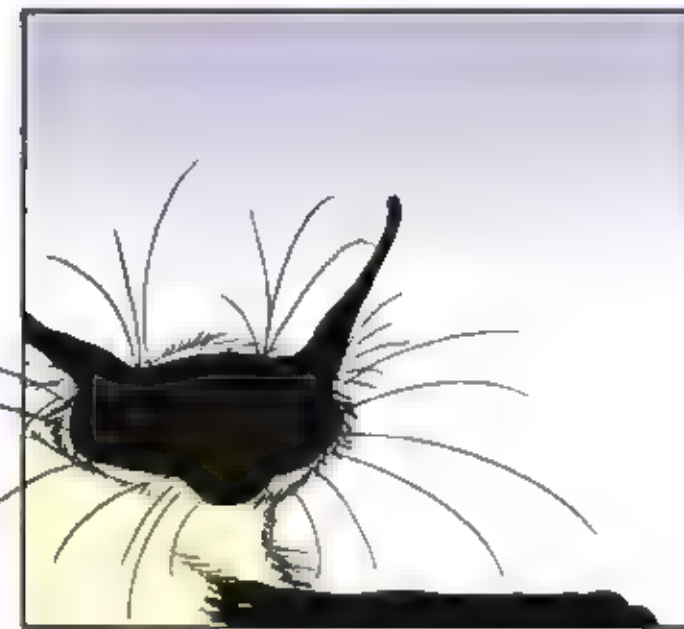
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Brooke



FULL
DEPLOYMENT



FRANCIS...I'M JUST
BEGINNING TO WONDER
WHERE WE'RE
GOING.

IT IS NOT AN EASY THING,
BEING, AS IT IS, A RELENTLESS
STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE MIND
AND THE BODY...
...OUR WAR, IF
YOU WILL, PITTING
THE SIREN SONG
OF FLESHLY
DESIRE
AGAINST
SPIRITUAL
FULFILLMENT.

NO...I MEANT ON THIS
MAP. I'M LOOKING FOR
THE NEAREST SUBWAY
STOP.

BUT DON'T LET
ME INTERRUPT.
...HOW IS
OUR WAR
PROGRESSING?

MAINLY
TO 72nd
STREET.

Bachman

7-9
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A LOCUTIONARY
FIELD GUIDE
TO EARTH

HEREAFTER: NOUN

A RESTRICTED
COMMUNITY
FOR THE HUMAN
SPIRIT.

THE HEREAFTER
EXCLUDES THE SHADES
OF DOGS, CATS AND
OTHER SUCH CREATURES,
PURSUANT TO THE
ASSERTION THAT
THEY ARE IN WANT
OF SOULS.



IN OTHER WORDS,
IT IS A PLACE
OF RARE PURITY,
UNPOLLUTED
BY THE COMPANY
OF ANY BEING
YOU WOULD
INHERENTLY
TRUST.



Barber

**LOCUTIONARY
FIELD GUIDE
TO EARTH**



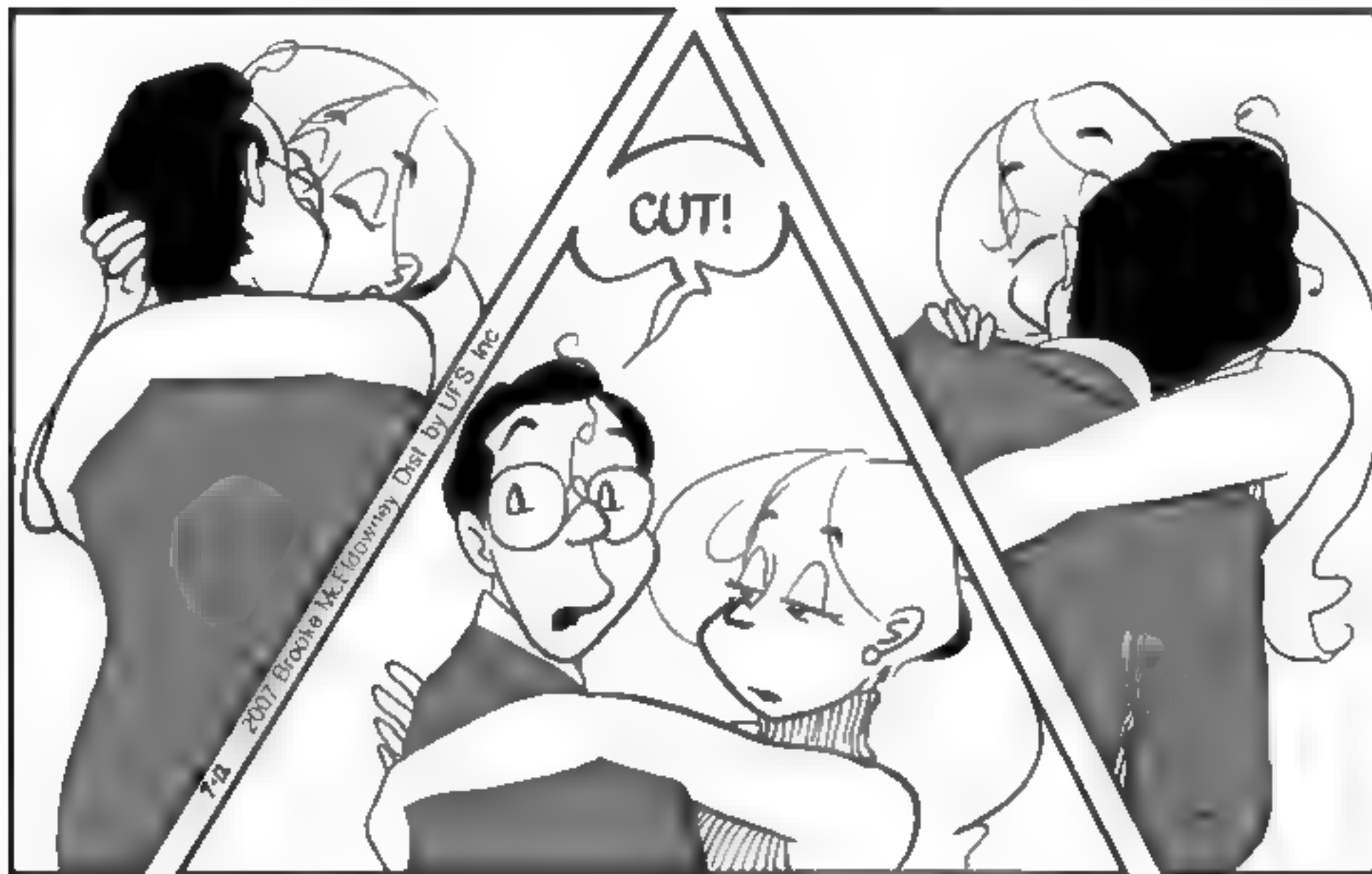
**NATURAL-BORN
LEADER: NOUN**

**AN UNTALENTED,
BENIGNLY USELESS
PERSON...**



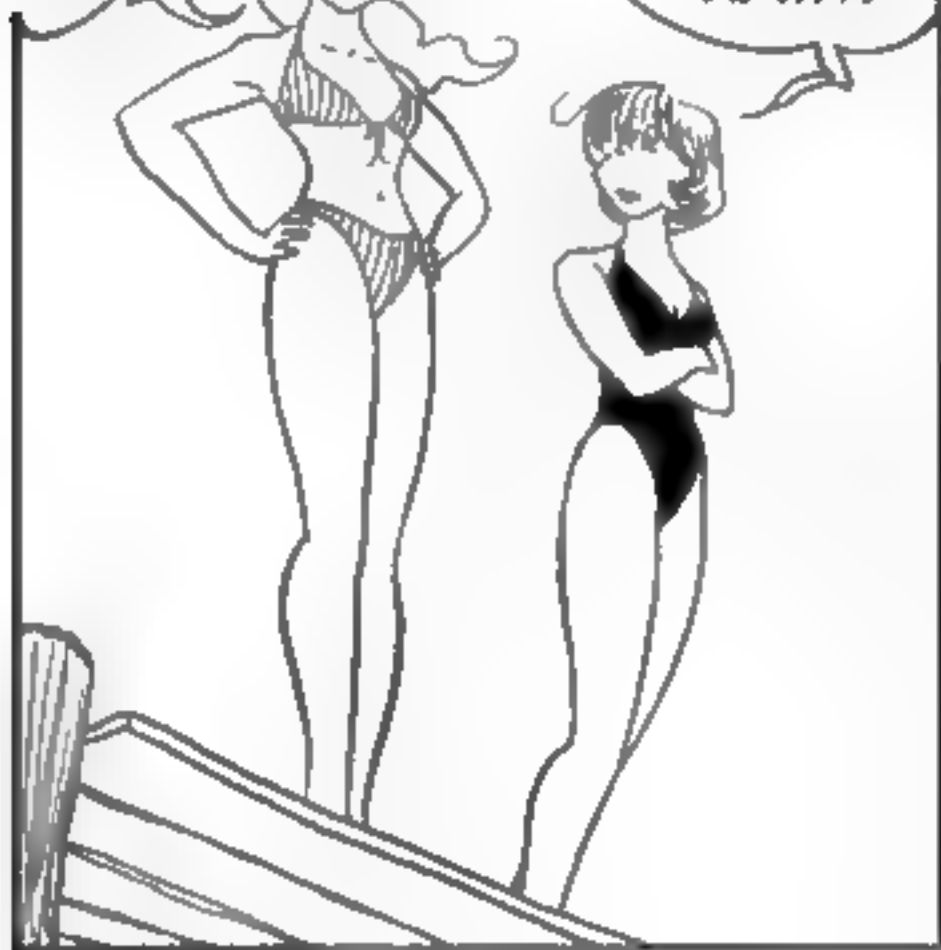
**...BUT FOR THE
POTENT SERVICES OF
THE NATURAL-BORN
LED.**

Brooke



I WONDER HOW
COLD THE
WATER
IS.

IS THAT
A BEE IN
YOUR
HAIR?



HOW COLD IS
THE WATER?

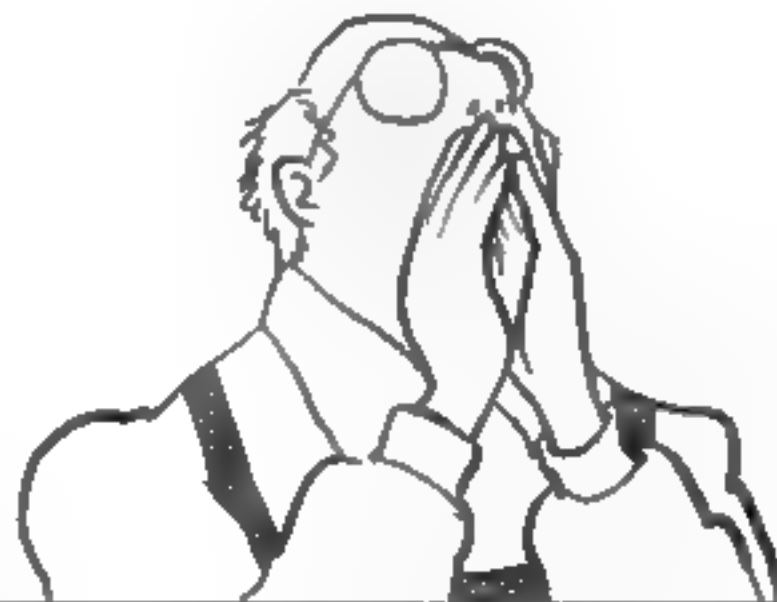
IN THE
INTERESTS
OF MOTHER-
DAUGHTER
AMITY,
NEVER
TELL ME
IF THERE
WAS
ACTUALLY
A BEE IN
MY HAIR.



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HEAVEN: NOUN

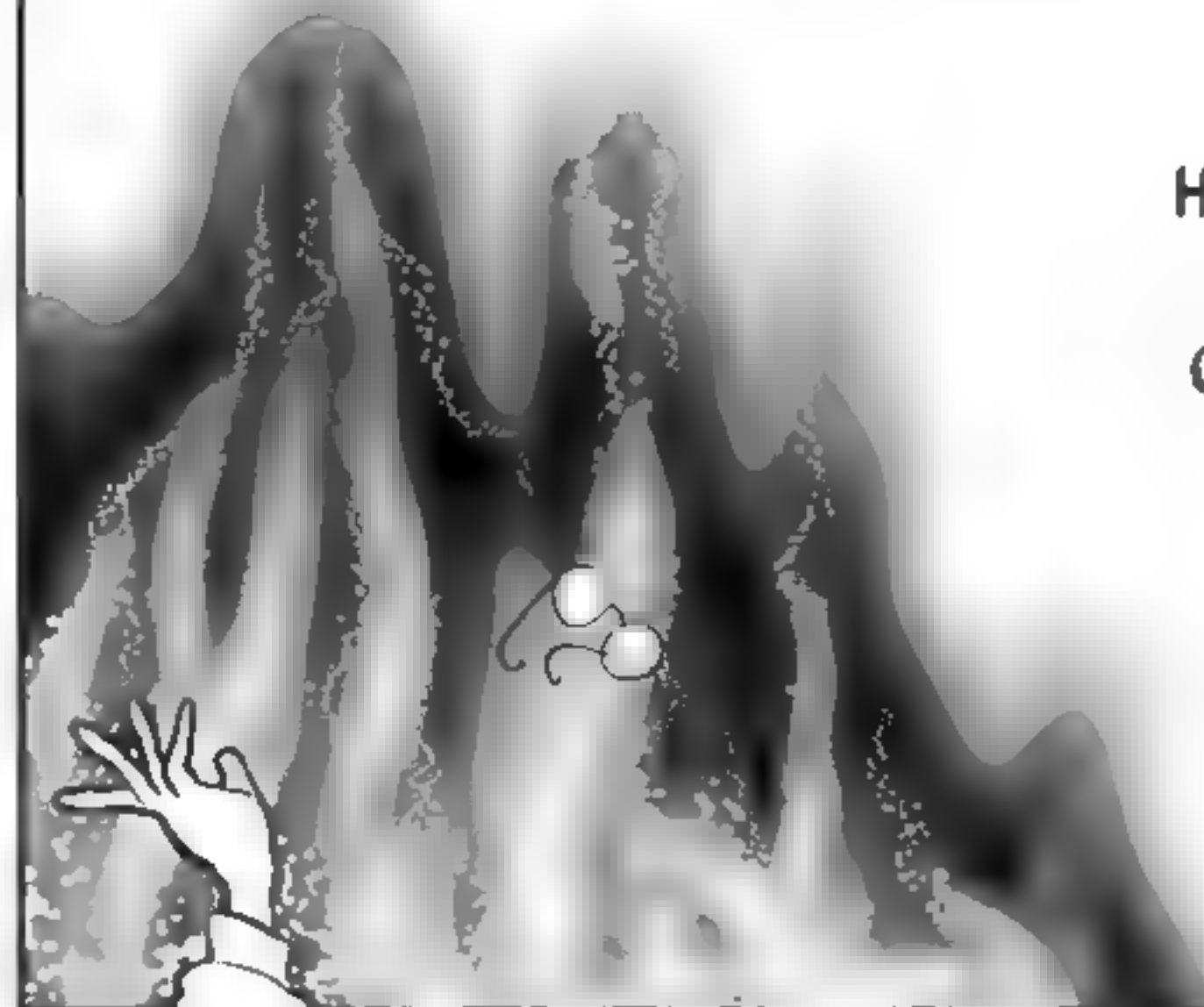
DYING
WISH



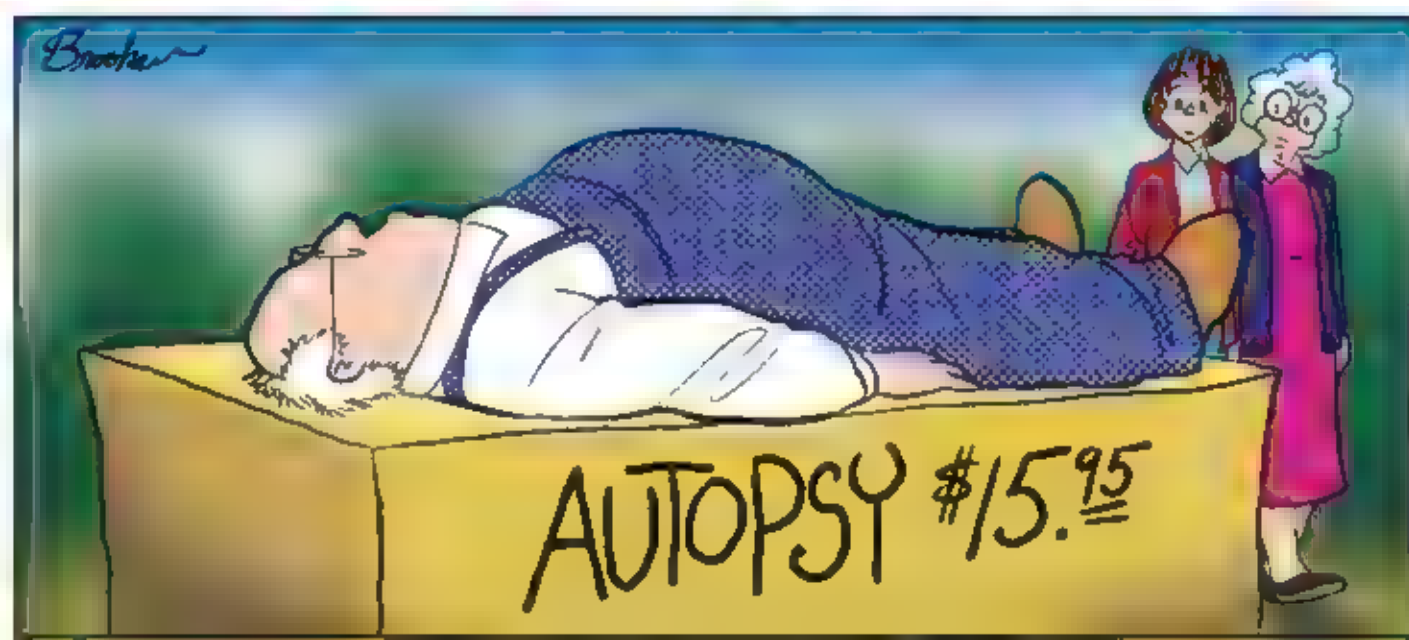
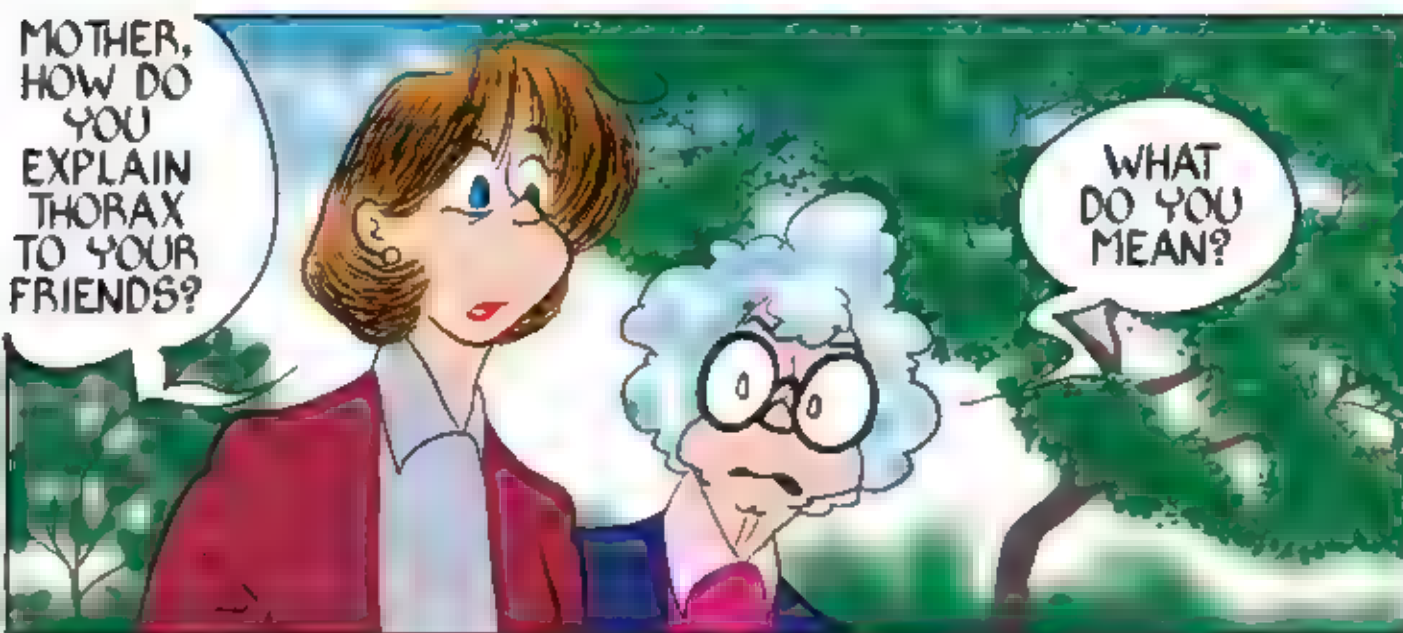
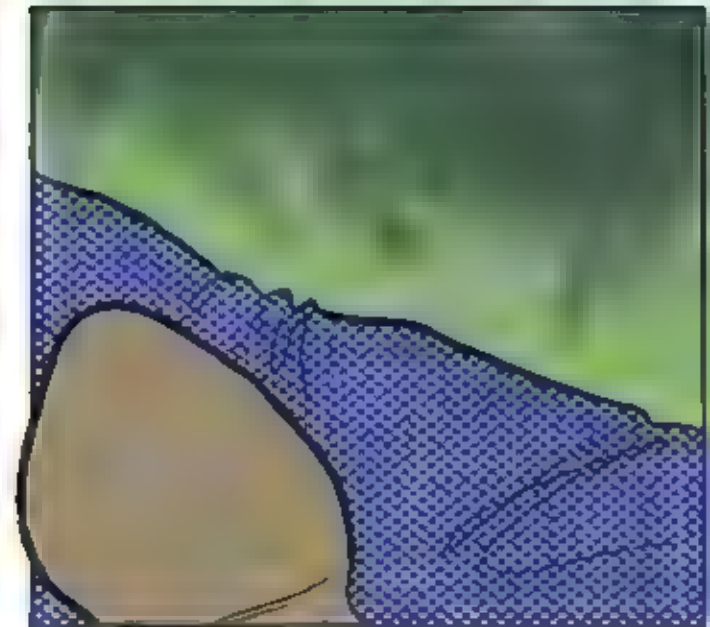
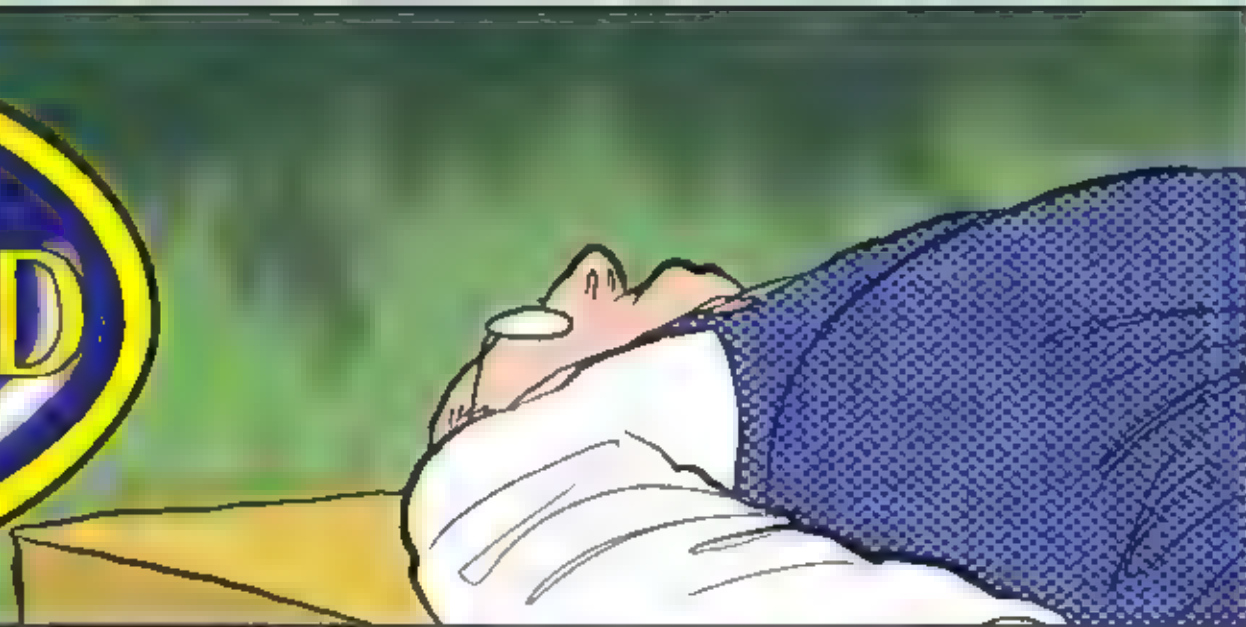
Brooke

HELL: NOUN

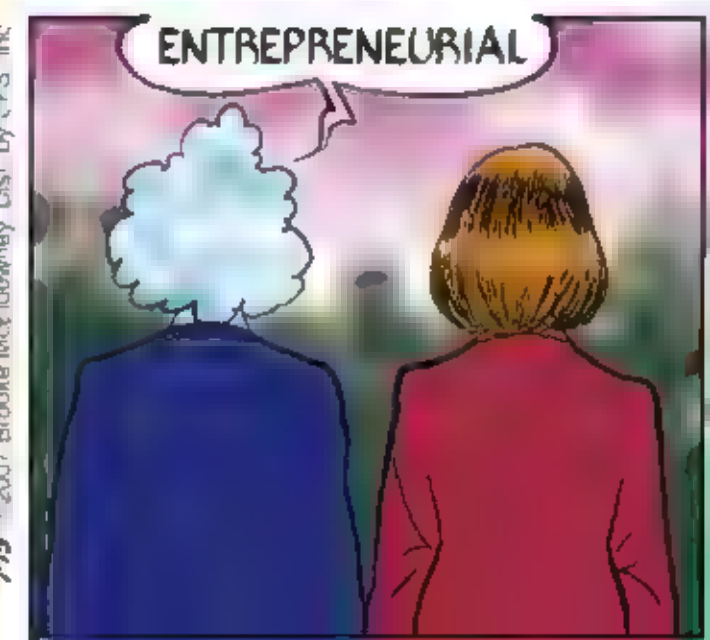
DEAD
CERTAINTY

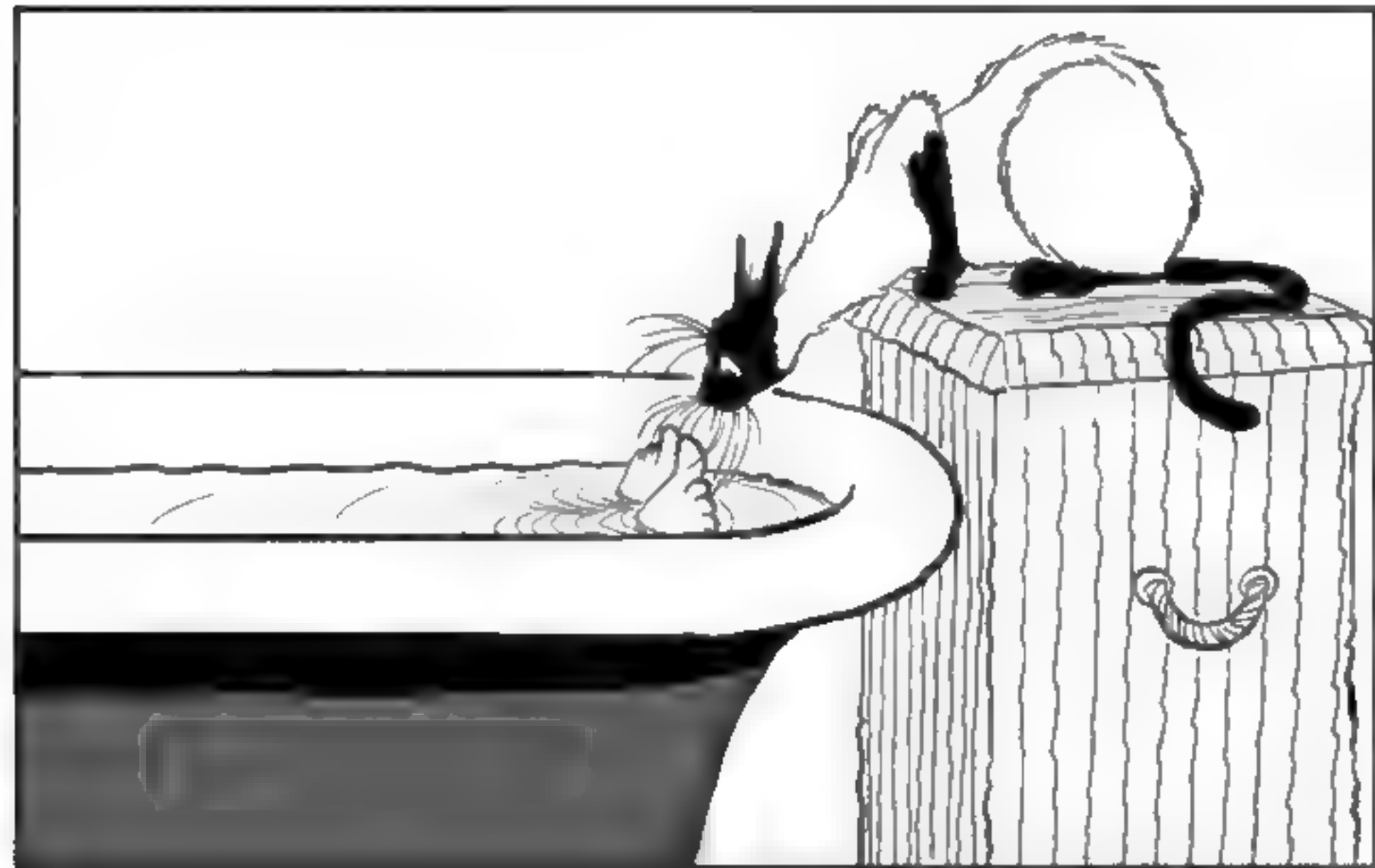


9 CHICKWEED LANE



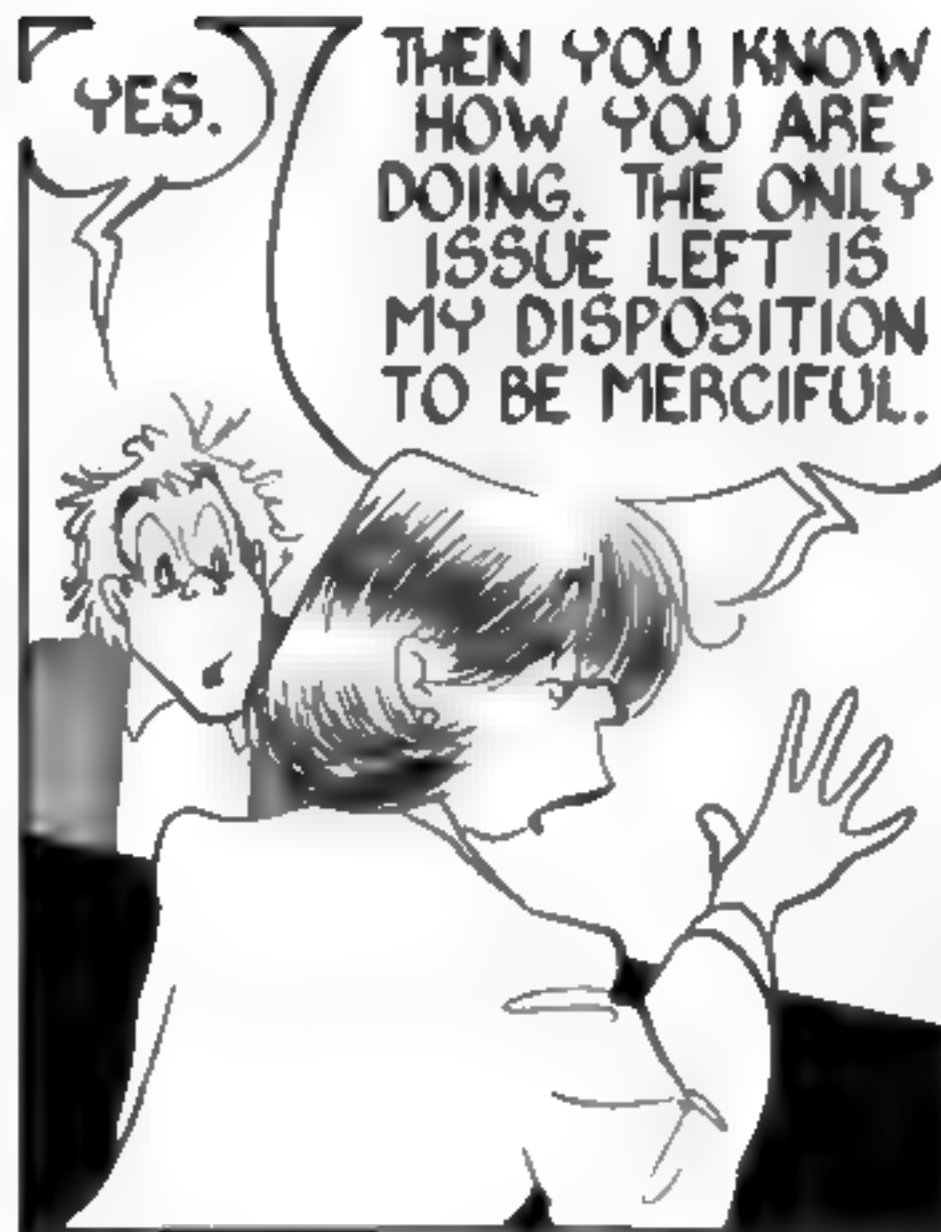
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SCIENCE: NOUN



GOD
OPEN TO
QUESTIONS



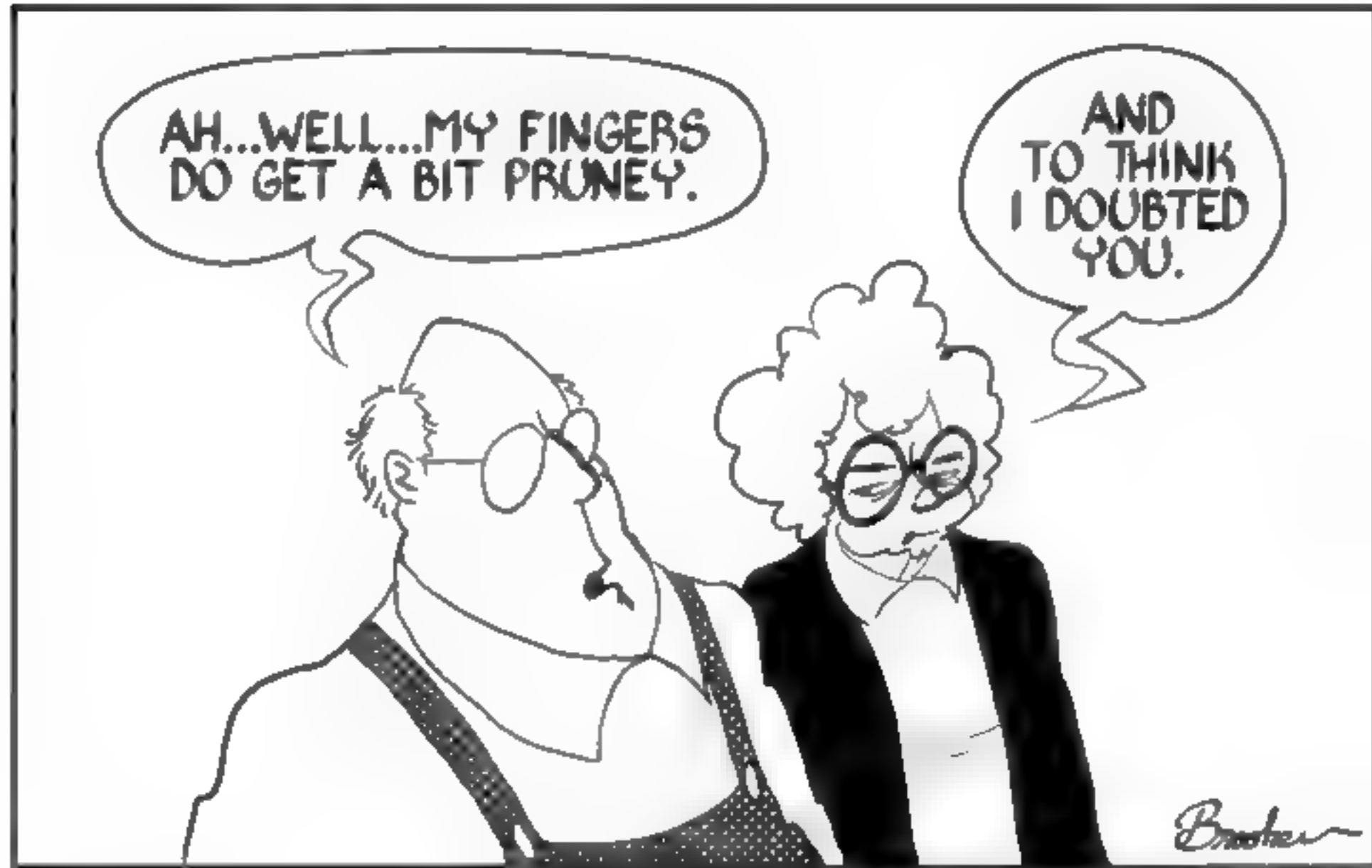
Brooke

ONE WOULD THINK, AFTER ALL
THESE YEARS OF COMMUTING
AROUND THE UNIVERSE AND
ACROSS TIME BARRIERS
VIA A QUANTUM ANOMALY
IN THE TRACTOR SHED,
AS YOU CLAIM, YOU'D
HAVE SOMETHING
MORE TO SHOW
FOR IT.



AH...WELL...MY FINGERS
DO GET A BIT PRUNEY.

AND
TO THINK
I DOUBTED
YOU.



Brooke

I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER IF
ALL MY YEARS ON EARTH
HAVE CAUSED ME
TO DEVELOP AN
ALLERGY TO
THE RELATIVE
WEALTH OF
NATIVE
MISCREANTS,
NOGOODNIKS
AND
WHORESONS.

AS A WOMAN
OF SCIENCE,
CAN YOU SUGGEST
A MEANS OF EMPIRICAL
ASSESSMENT?

Boake

THORAX, MAY I PRESENT
THE TRUSTEES OF THE
UNIVERSITY.

MY
EYES
ARE
ITCHY.

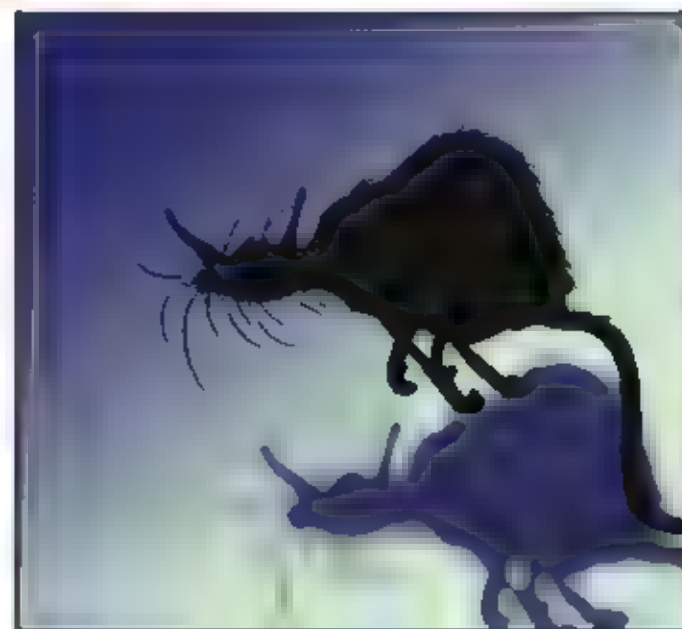
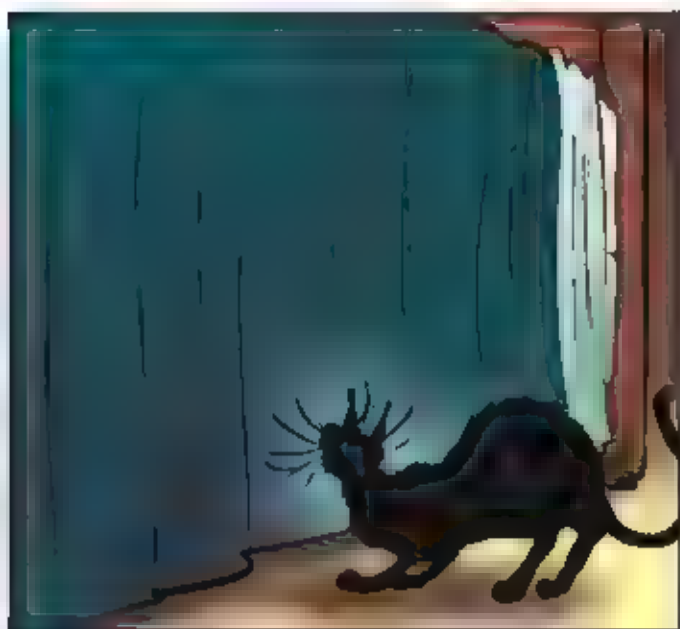
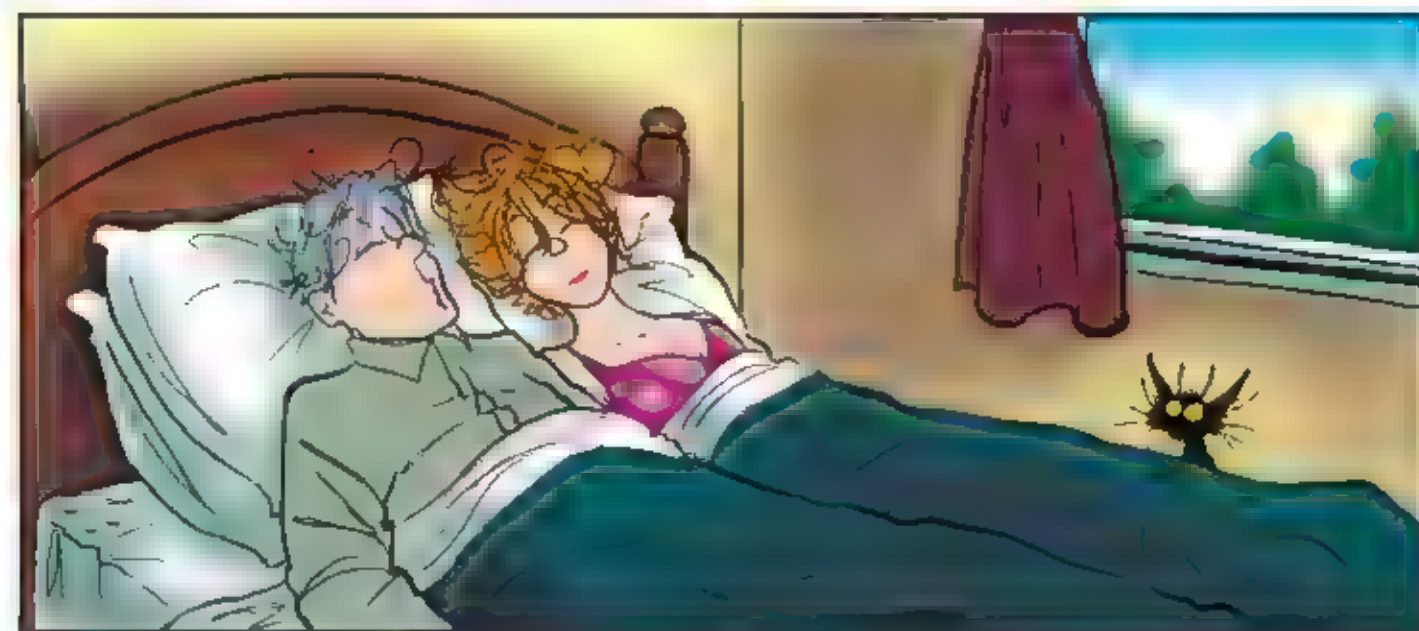
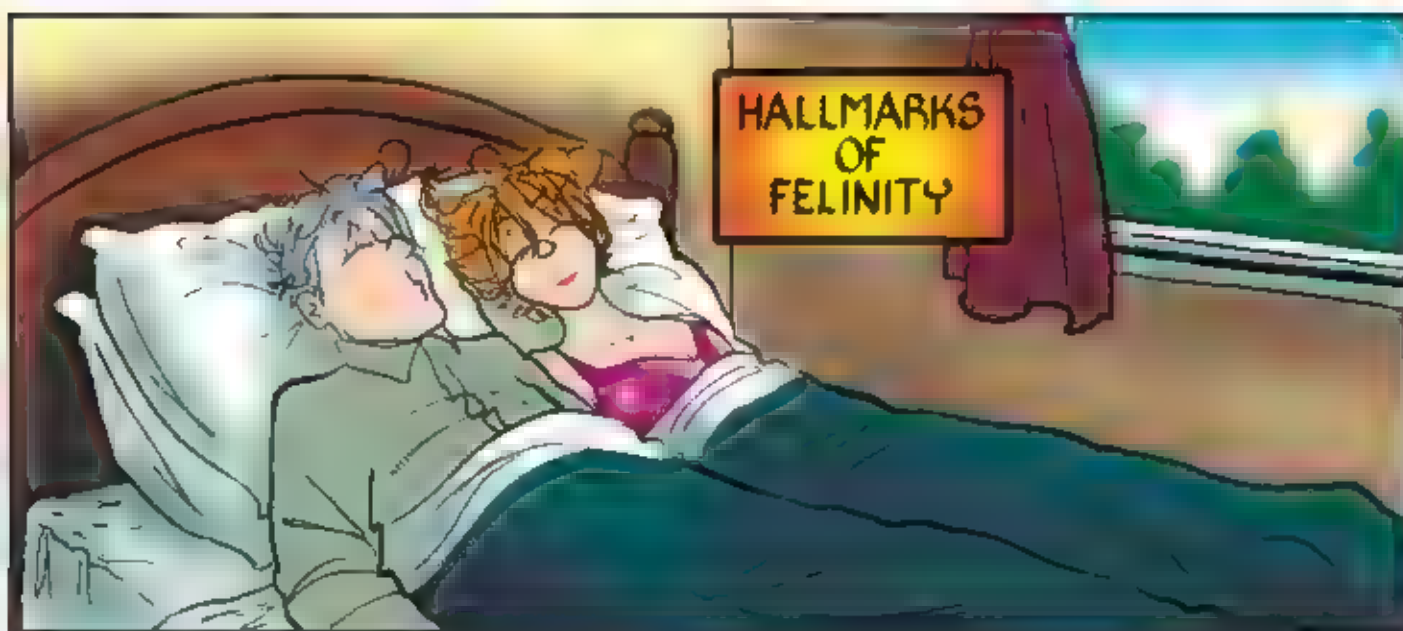
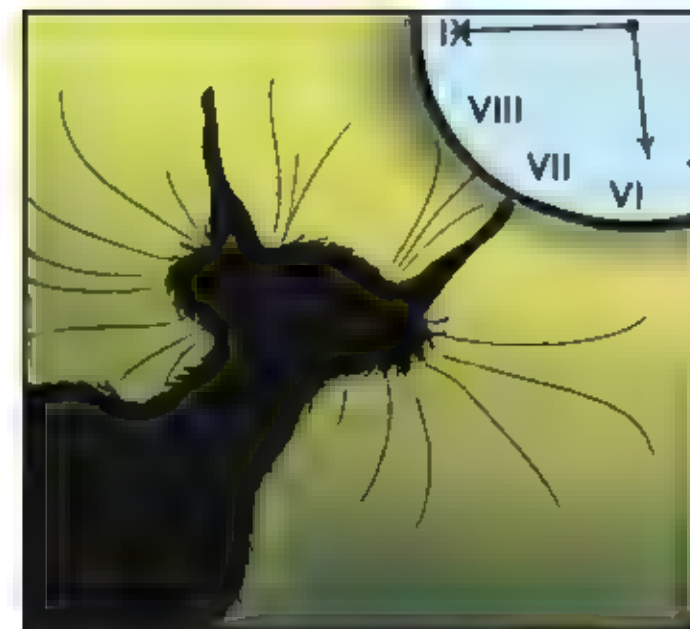
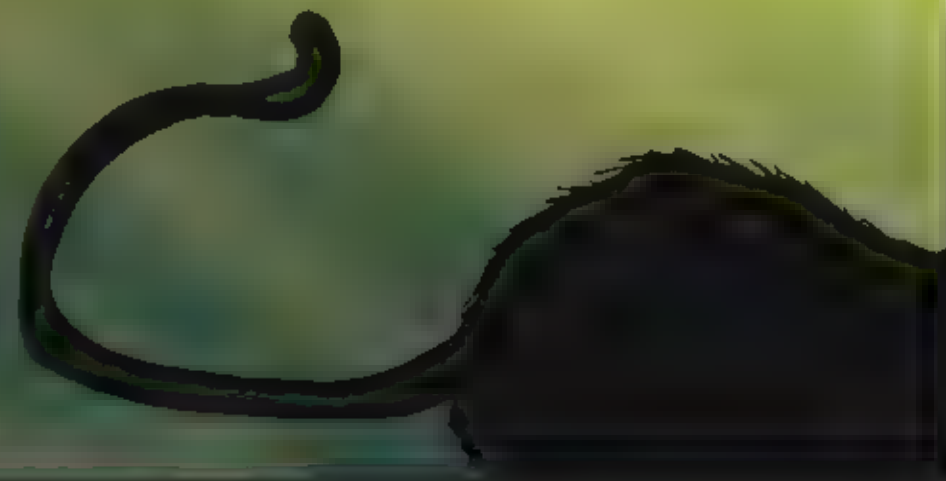
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HOLY:
COSMETIC ADJECTIVE

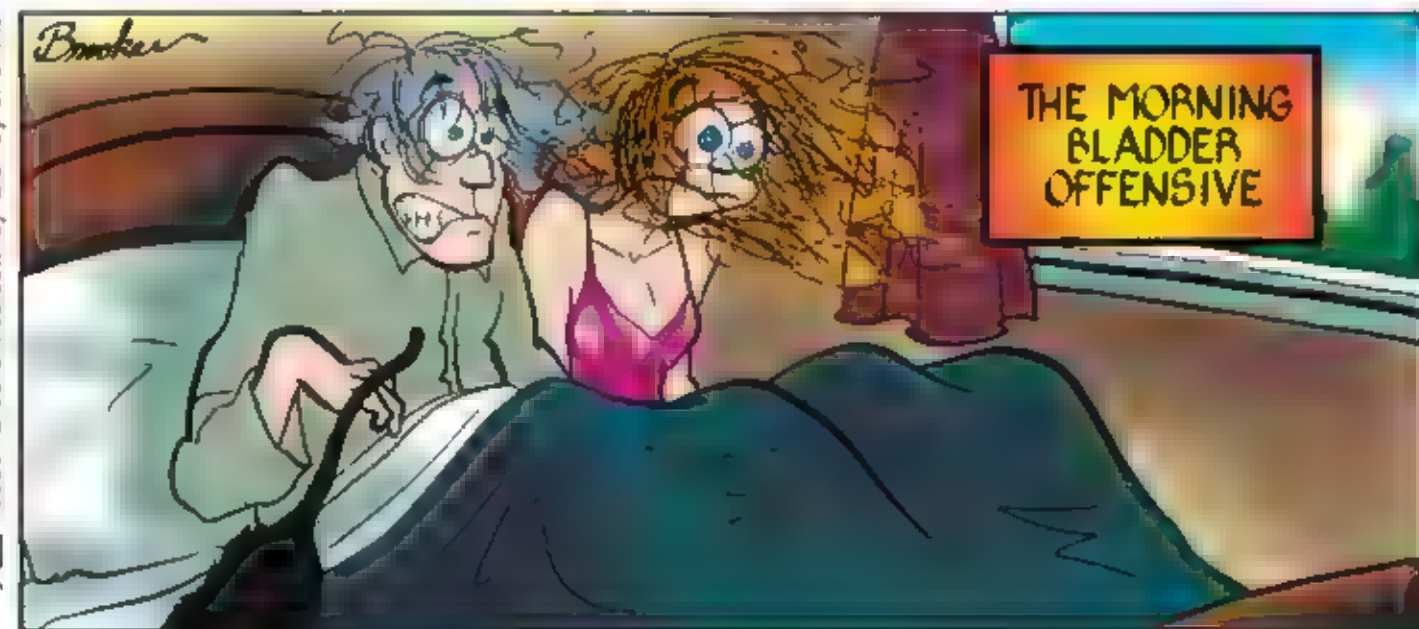


ON EARTH,
ANY HOSTILE
ACTIVITY,
SUCH AS A WAR
OR POGROM,
WITH A CELEBRITY
ENDORSEMENT
FROM GOD

Brooke



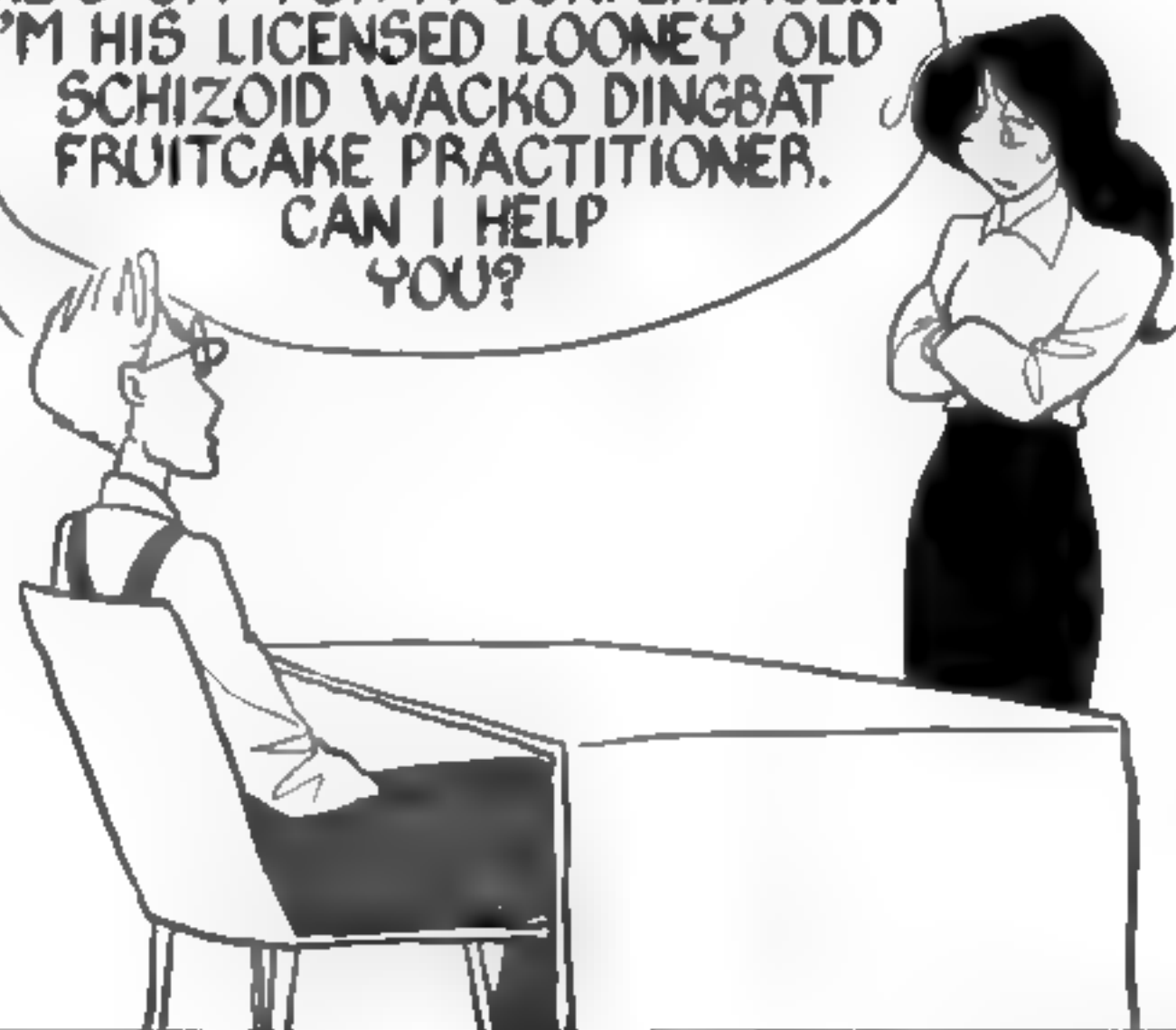
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EXCUSE ME, WHERE IS
THE LOONEY OLD SCHIZOID
WACKO DINGBAT FRUITCAKE
WHO USUALLY PARKS HIS
CARCASS HERE?



HE'S OFF FOR A CONFERENCE...
...I'M HIS LICENSED LOONEY OLD
SCHIZOID WACKO DINGBAT
FRUITCAKE PRACTITIONER.
CAN I HELP
YOU?



Brooke

INASMUCH AS I'M PAYING
FOR THIS, THAT MAKES
YOU MY EMPLOYEE.
I'D LIKE YOU
TO TELL ME
HOW YOU PLAN
TO PERFORM
YOUR JOB.



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LET ME SEE...IT WILL BE MY
BOUNDEN DUTY, BY MEANS
OF AWE MIXED LIBERALLY
WITH TERROR, TO MAKE
YOU SWEAT BLOOD IN
AN EVER-ELUSIVE
QUEST FOR A-LEVEL
WORK. AND THE
ANGELS WILL
WEEP FOR
THEE.



Broken

AH...LOSS OF
BLADDER CONTROL.
I CONSIDER THAT
A GOOD PERFORMANCE
REVIEW.



DR. BURBER, I JUST WANTED
TO ASK YOU TO CUT MY
BOYFRIEND SOME SLACK IN
YOUR CLASS. HE HAS AN
OUTSIDE JOB AND...



Burber

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YOU'RE PRE-MED,
AND YOU DO
GOOD WORK,
RIGHT?



WELL...
...YES.

THEN I'LL BE GLAD TO CUT
HIM SOME SLACK. I'LL GIVE
HIS INFERIOR WORK A PASS
AND, ACCORDINGLY, WATER
DOWN THE CONSEQUENCE
OF YOUR OWN GRADES,
COMPROMISE YOUR
ADMISSION TO MEDICAL
SCHOOL, SCUTTLE YOUR
DREAMS...AND
ALL FOR
LOVE.



I MEAN,
GOLLY,
IT JUST
BRINGS
TEARS
TO MY EYES.

IT JUST
BROUGHT
TEARS TO
MINE.



HAVE YOU
ANY OTHER NAMES
THAN "THORAX"?

I DON'T HAVE
A FIRST NAME,
BUT MY PARENTS
DID GIVE ME
A MIDDLE ONE.

ODDLY, THERE WAS A TIME
WHEN THAT RESPONSE
WOULD HAVE TROUBLED
ME, BUT NOW...

IT'S A VERY SIMPLE
NAME, REALLY,
BUT THEY
DEVOTED AN
INORDINATE
AMOUNT OF
TIME ON THE
EXPONENT.

Banker

SO...YOU DON'T HAVE
A FIRST NAME, BUT
YOU DO HAVE
A MIDDLE.
WHAT IS
IT?

FJFFL...
...PRONOUNCED
"EDITH" OR
"FRANKLIN,"
DEPENDING
ON HOW
YOU
STRESS
THE
"B."

Barker

I...
...YOU...
BUT...UM...
...YOU...YOU
DON'T...
...WHERE...

EVERYONE
SAYS THAT.
IT ALWAYS
MAKES ME
BLUSH.

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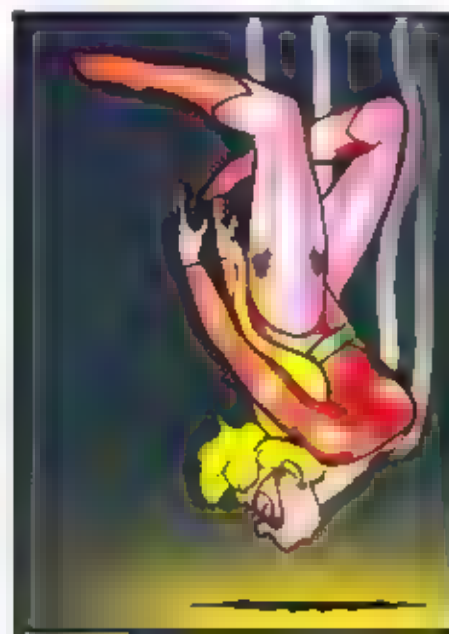
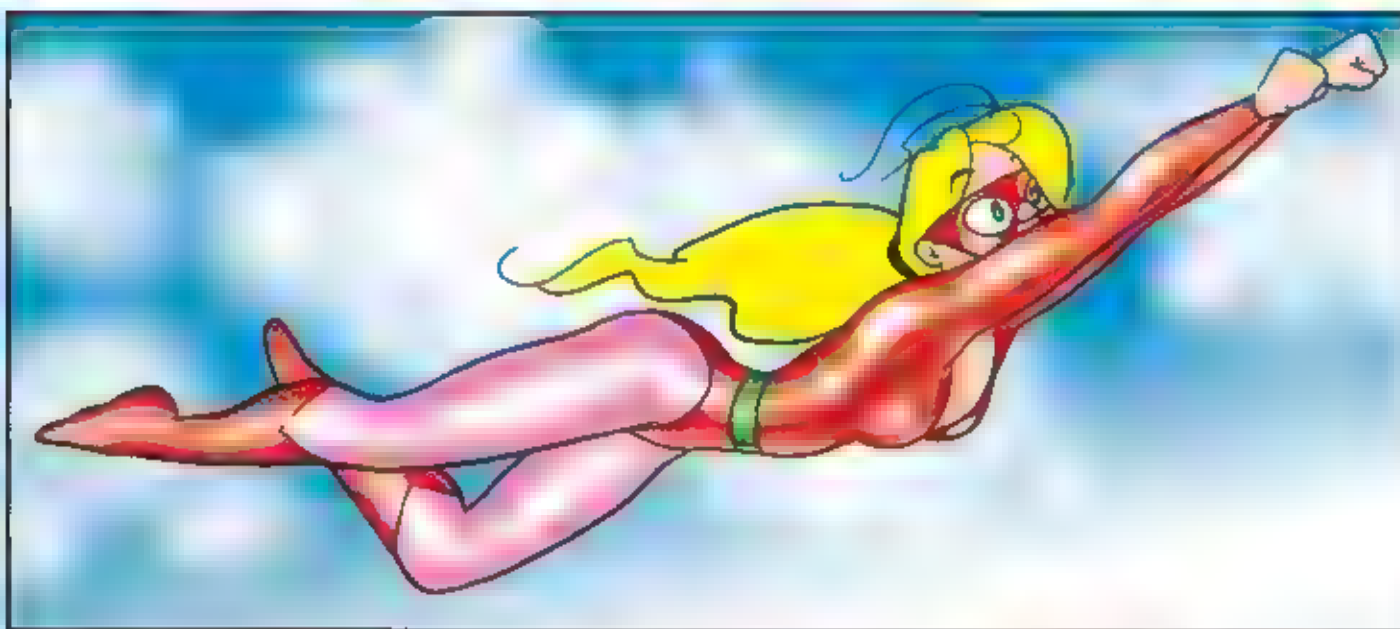
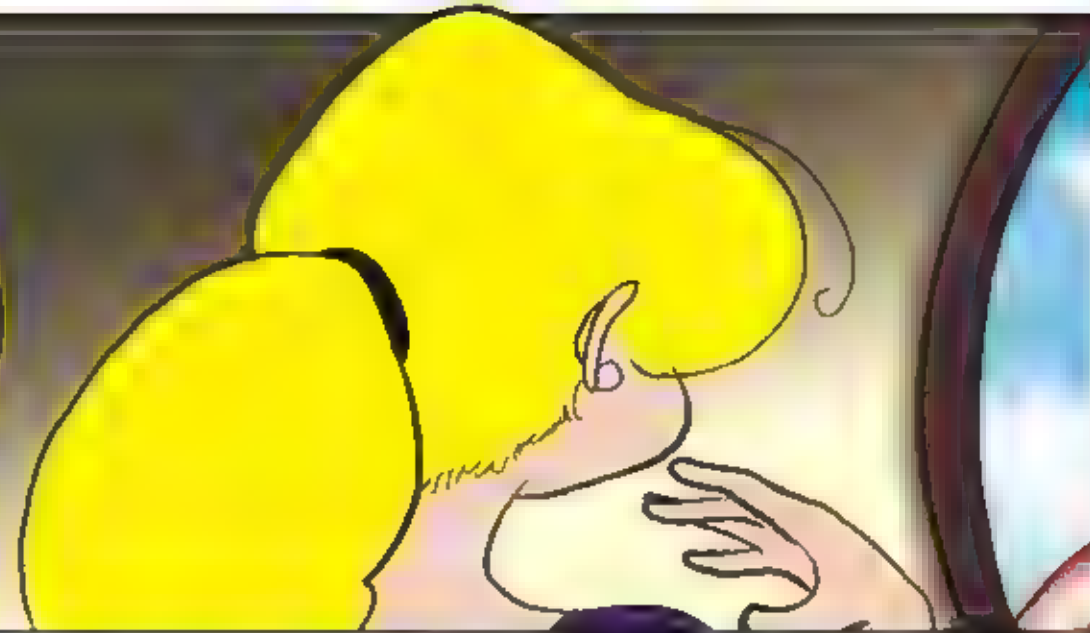
WHEN YOU'RE ALL AT SEA
WITH ONE OF LIFE'S CONUNDRUMS,
WHAT DO YOU DO, PAP?

BOY,
I ALWAYS
LISTEN TO MY
HEART.

UNLESS I'M VERY
MUCH MISTAKEN,
THAT'S
"IS YOU IS
OR IS YOU AIN'T
MY BABY?"

WITH
GENE KRUPA
ON THE
SKINS.

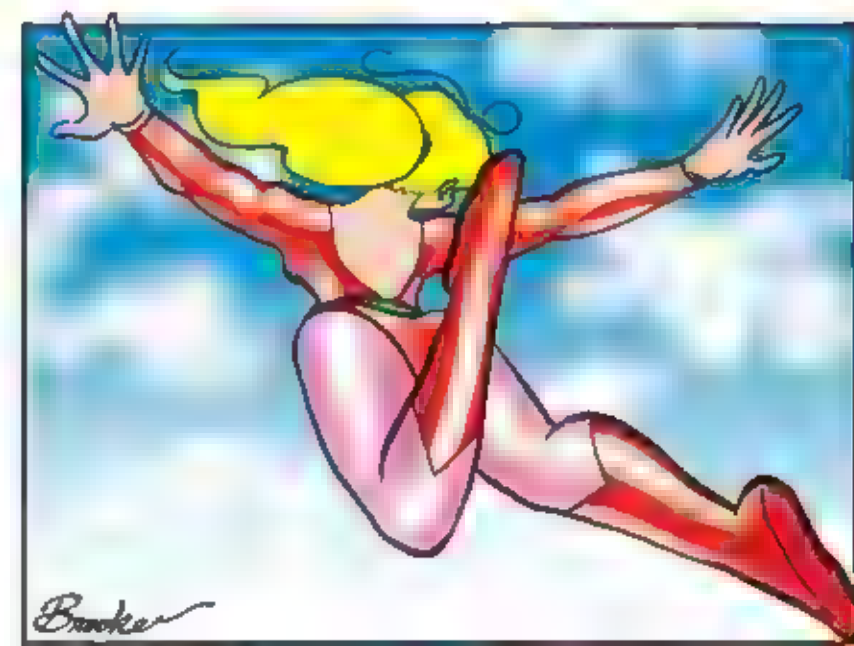
Brooke



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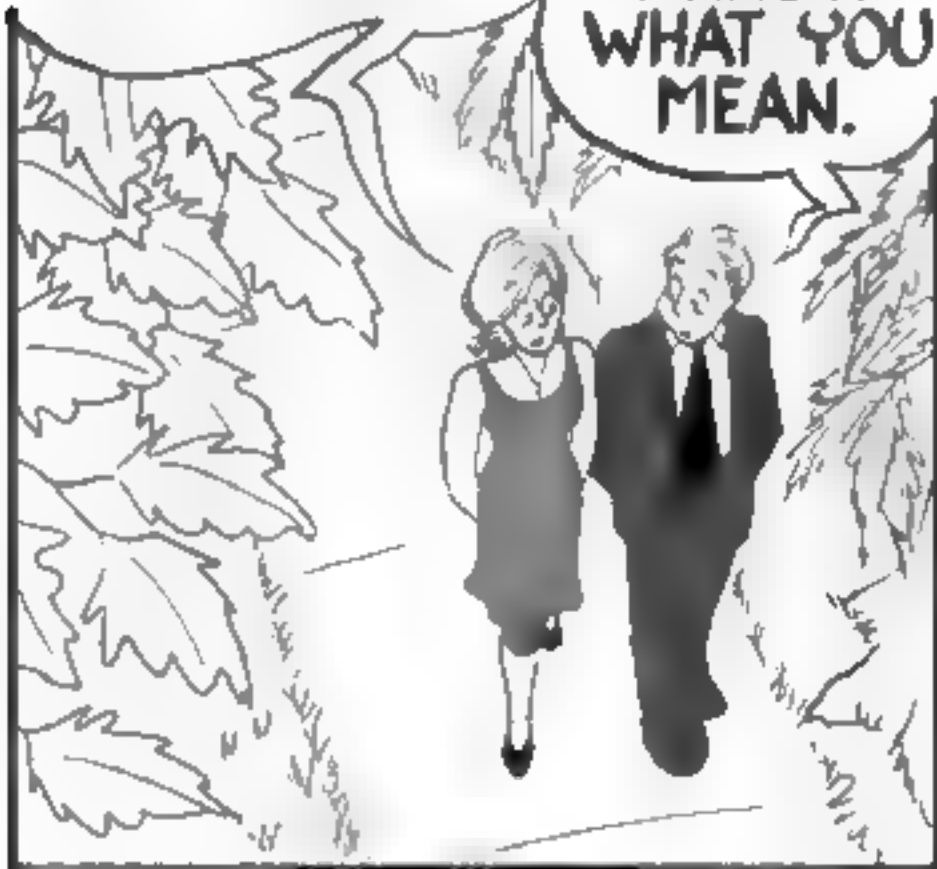


HOLD ON, I WAS WRONG...THAT
ISN'T A ZIT ON YOUR CHIN...IT'S A
SESAME
SEED.



WE MEET HERE EVERY DAY, WALK, EAT LUNCH TOGETHER...AND WE NEVER DISCUSS THE OBVIOUS.

YES, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.



WE NEVER EVEN ALLUDE TO IT.

WE TIPTOE AROUND IT, PRETEND IT ISN'T EVEN THERE.

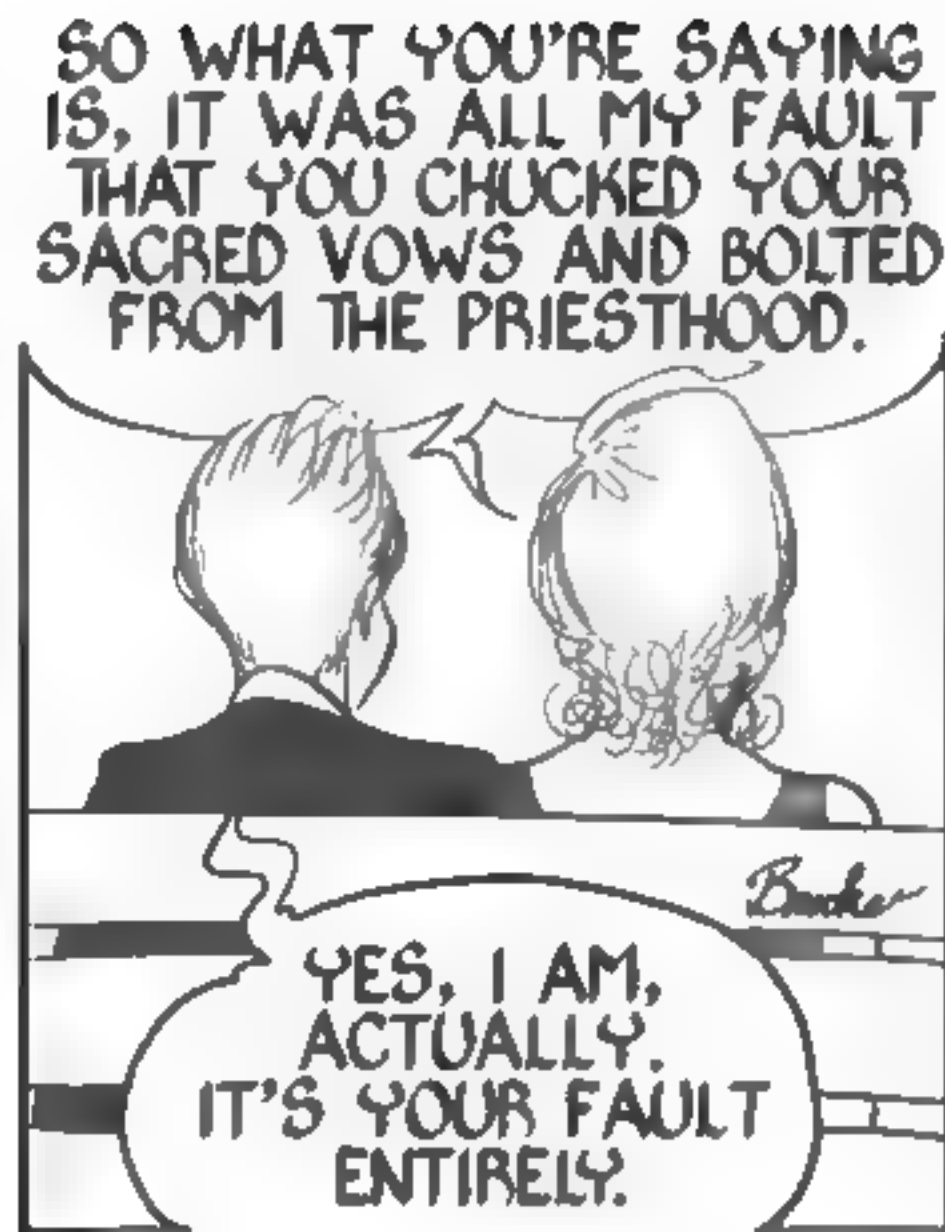


FIRST, I SUPPOSE WE HAVE TO AGREE ON OUR TERMINOLOGY.



I LOVE IT WHEN WE AGREE ON OUR TERMINOLOGY.





I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT I FEEL
FRANCIS AND I ARE IN SOME
KIND OF STASIS.

A HOLDING PATTERN,
A DEEP FREEZE, A MIRE,
A RUT, A LOOP,
LIMBO?...

OKAY, AMOS, AS YOUR
FORMER ENGLISH TEACHER,
I'D PREFER WE STANCH THE
FLOW OF SYNONYMS
AND ADDRESS
SOLUTIONS.

CURES, THERAPIES,
RESOLUTIONS, BAND-AIDS,
REMEDIES, ANTIDOTES,
NOSTRUMS, MAGIC
BULLETS...

I COULD
KILL
ROGET.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO GO WITH DIANE...SHE IS EVERYTHING TO ME. WE MEET AND HAVE LUNCH AND TALK...AND WE WANT TO SAY SOMETHING TO EACH OTHER, BUT WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS, OR HOW TO SAY IT.

Bruckner

I CAN SHOW YOU THE WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT, BUT FIRST YOU NEED A PIN-STRIPE, DOUBLE BREASTED SUIT, PATENT LEATHER PUMPS, AND THE SINUOUS, SMOKING STRAINS OF A BANDONEON.

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IS THIS GOING TO HURT?

YOU'RE A MAN IN LOVE. ...WHAT DO YOU THINK?

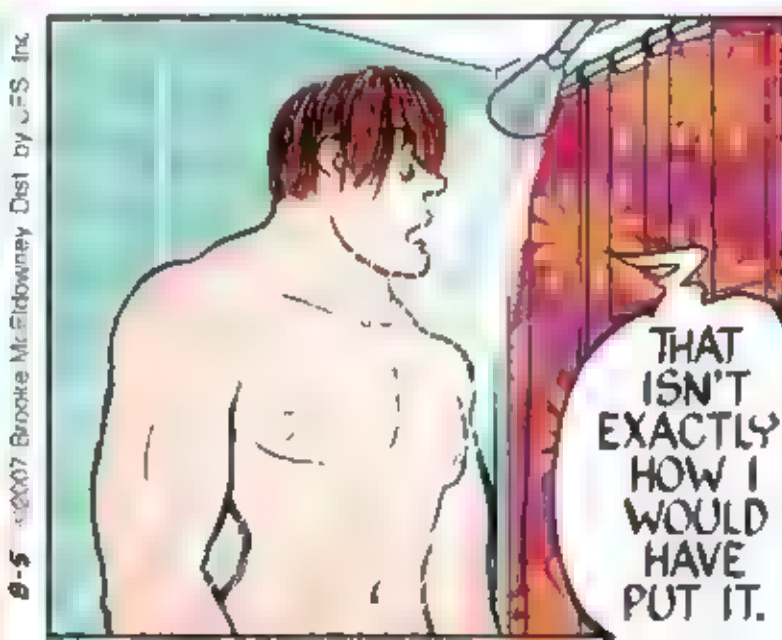
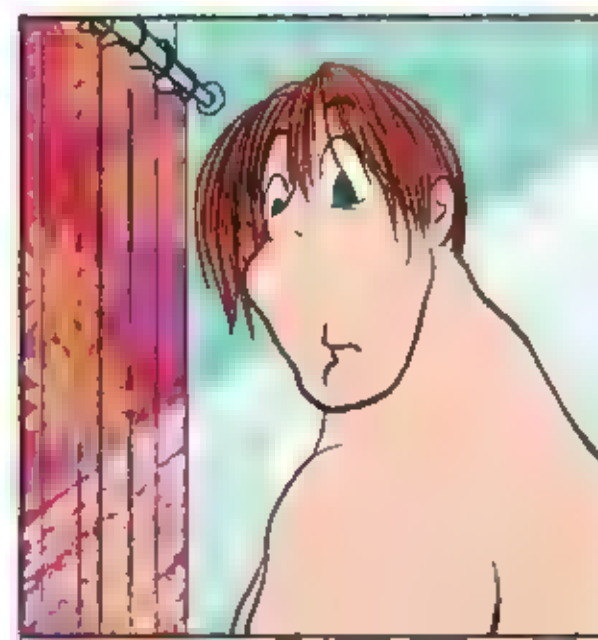
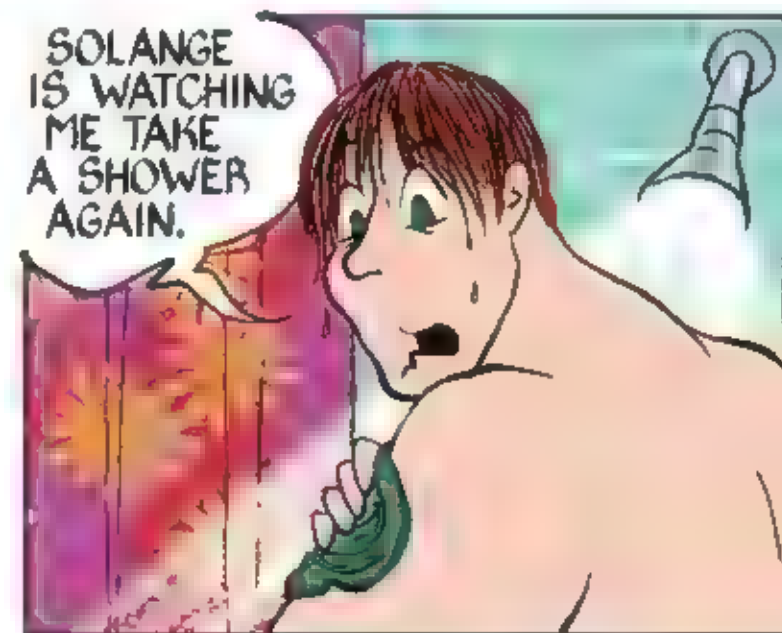
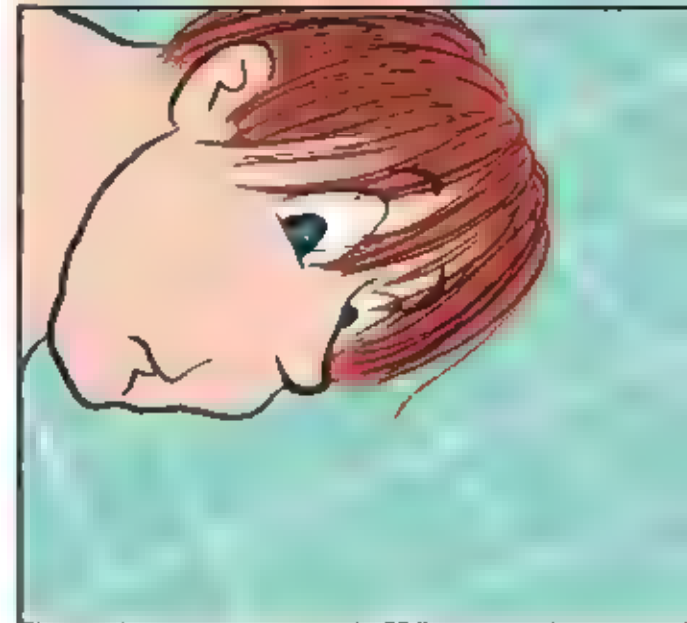
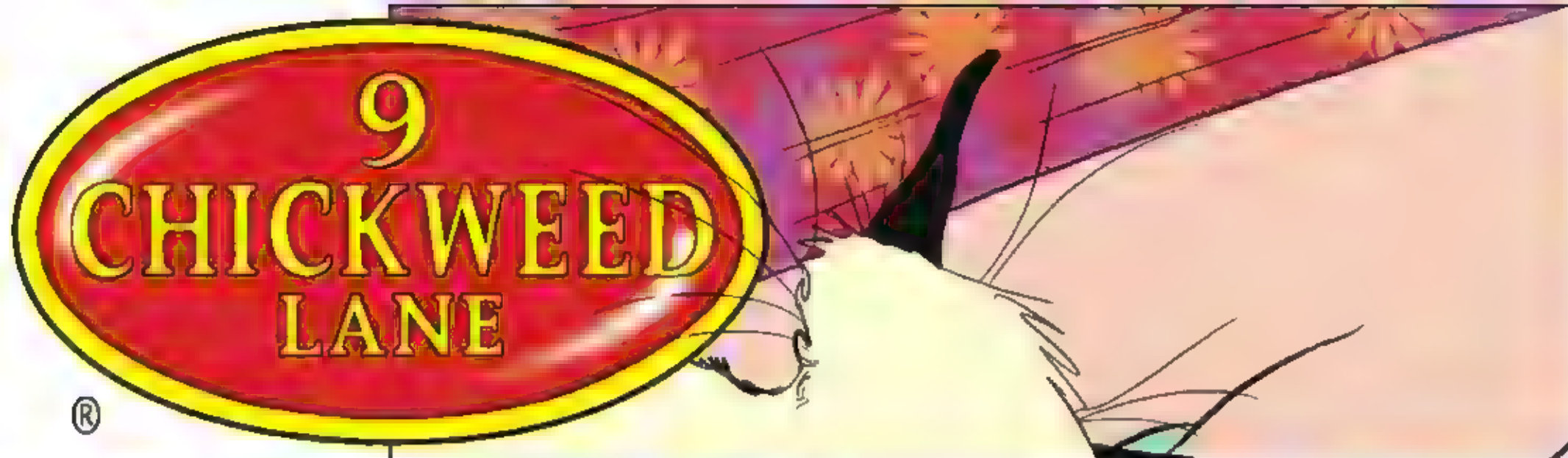
Booker

I WAS
TALKING TO
FRANCIS.

I WAS
TALKING TO
DIANE.

I THINK
WE BOTH KNOW
WHAT MUST
BE DONE.

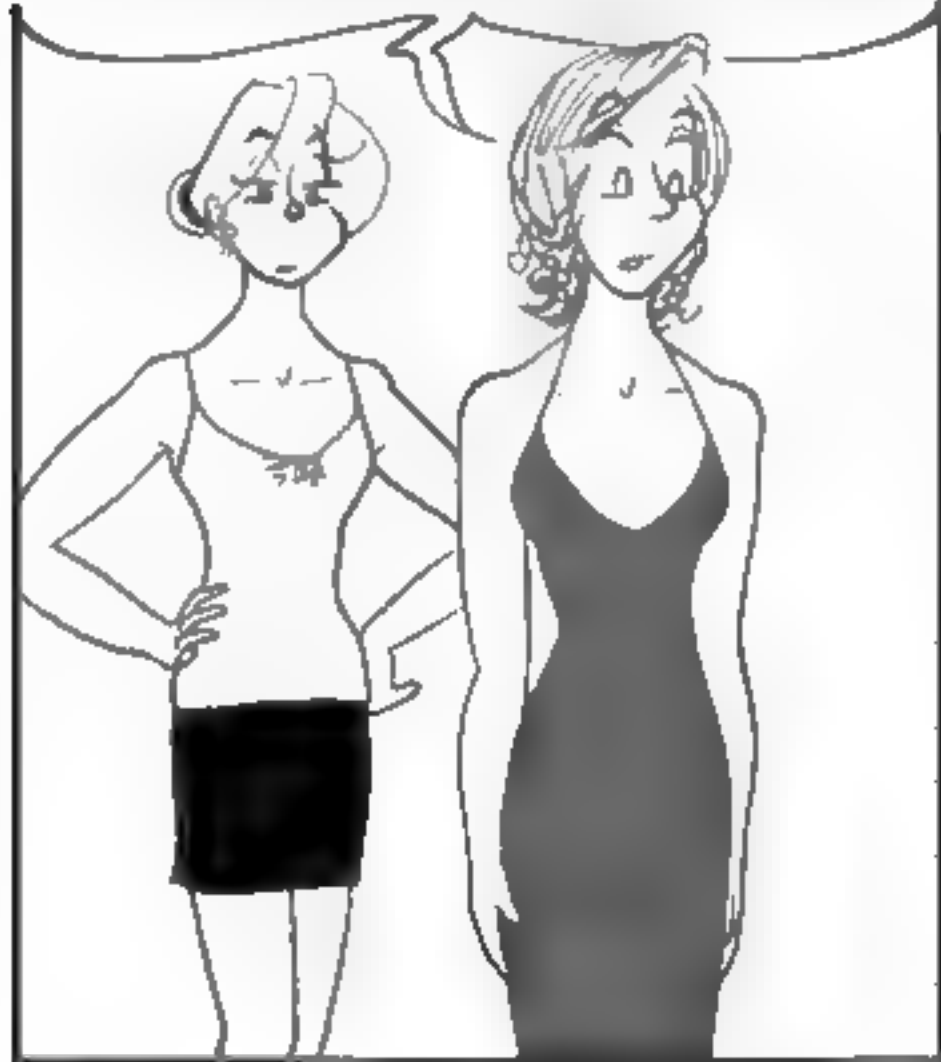








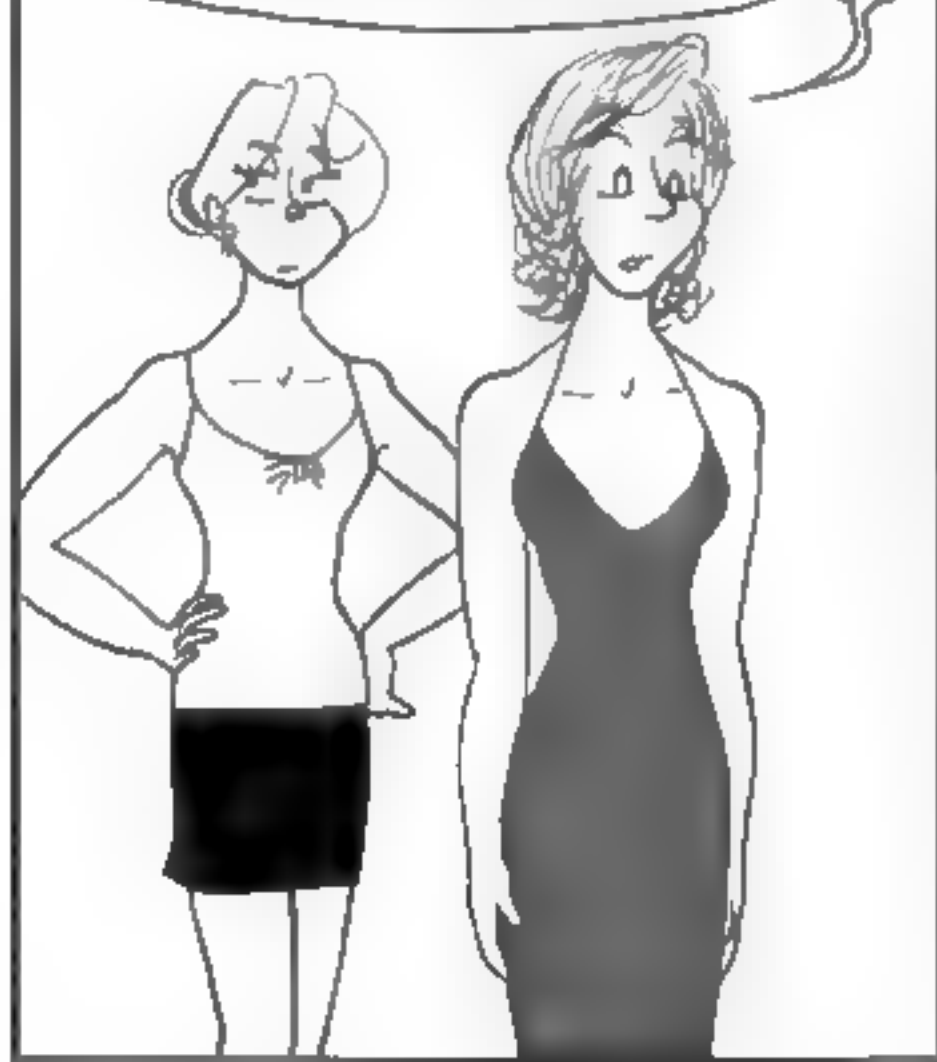
HOW CAN I WEAR A DRESS
LIKE THIS AROUND FRANCIS?



I BELIEVE YOU KNOW HOW
YOU WEAR A DRESS LIKE
THAT.



OKAY, BUT TURN YOUR
BACK FIRST.



AND JUST CONTINUE DOING
THAT UNTIL YOUR JOINTS
STOP POPPING.



IS FRANCIS
READY?

DON'T HAVE
A KITTEN...
I WAS JUST
PUTTING ON THE
FINISHING
TOUCHES.

Bunker

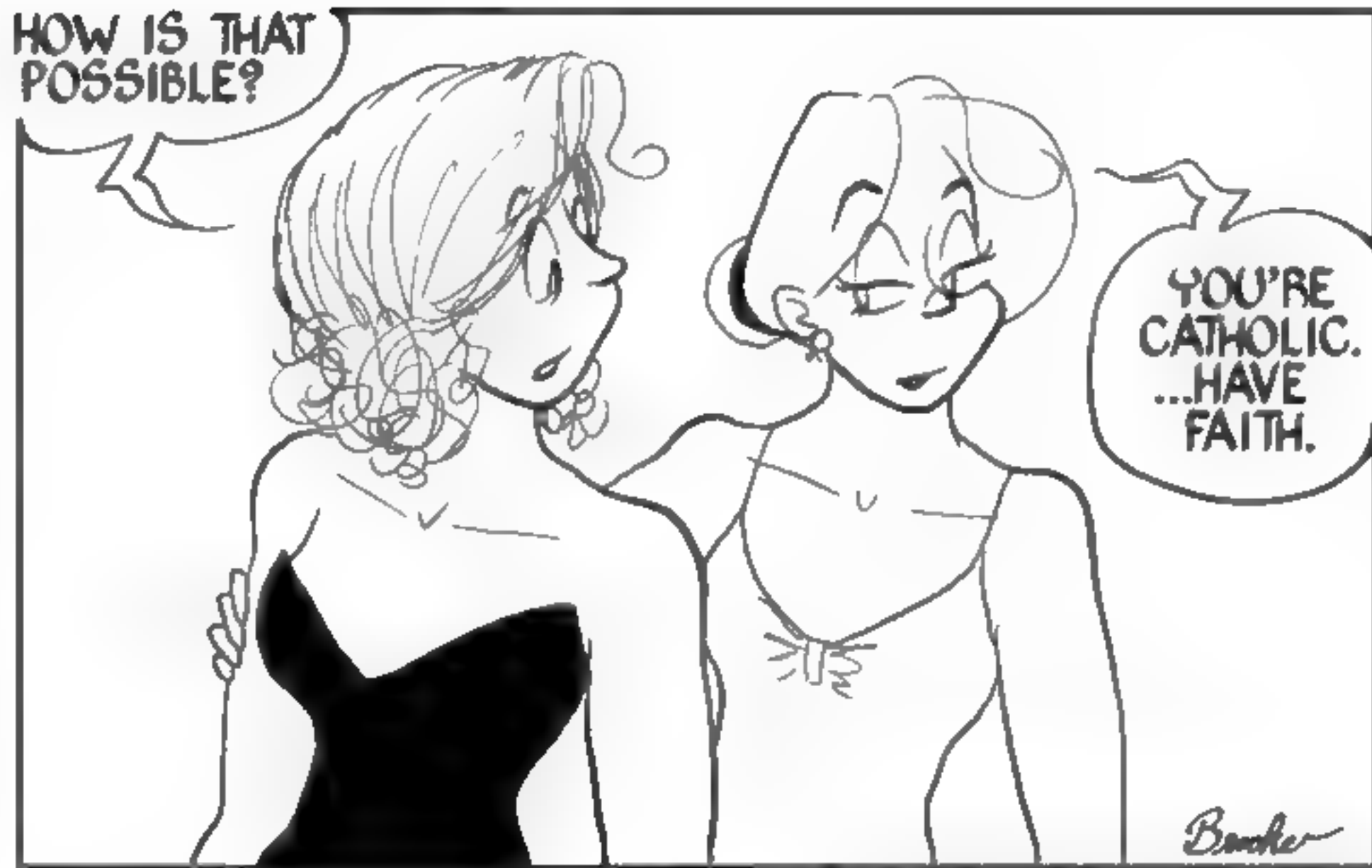
HEAVENS
CARLOS
GARDEL!

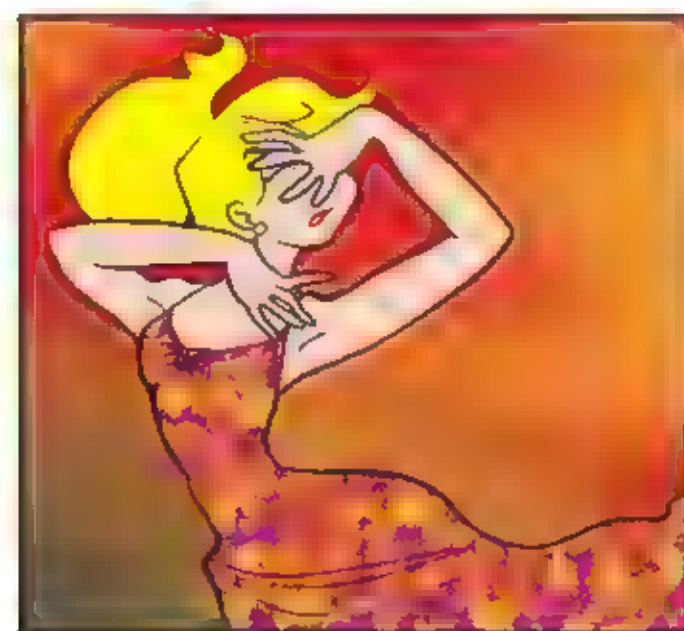
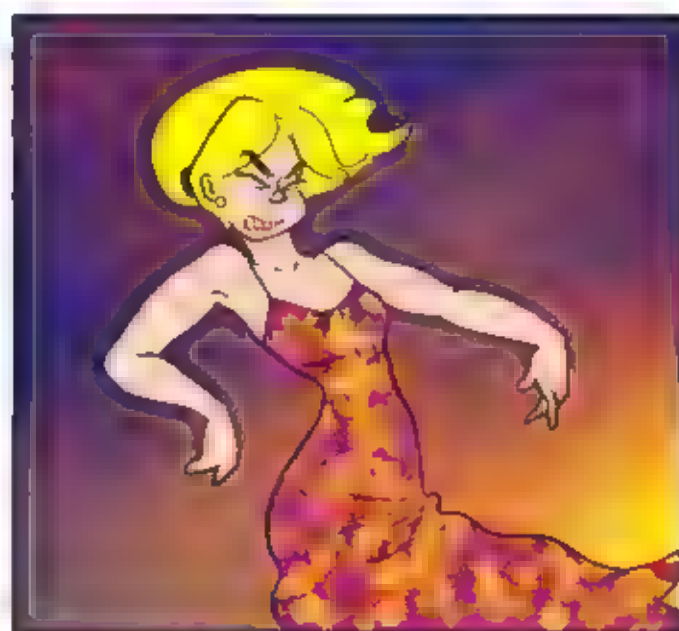
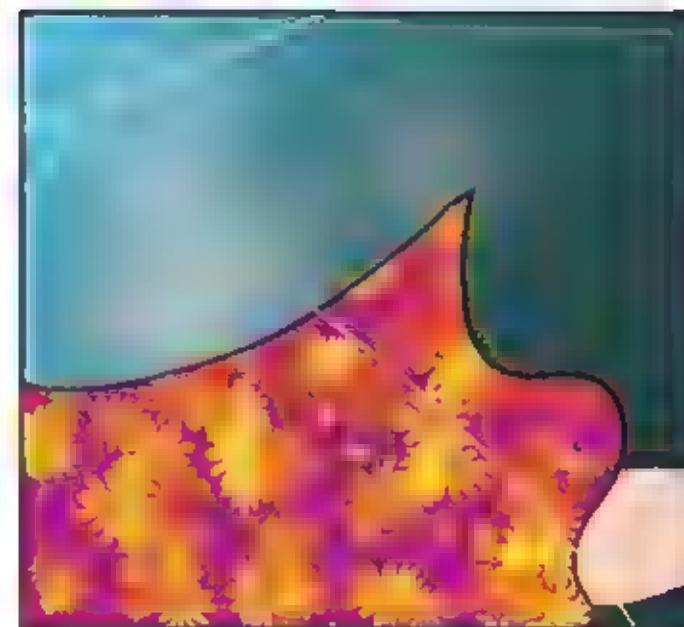
Who?

I ADDED
THE
MUSTACHE...
I JUST HAPPENED
TO HAVE AN
EYEBROW
PENCIL.

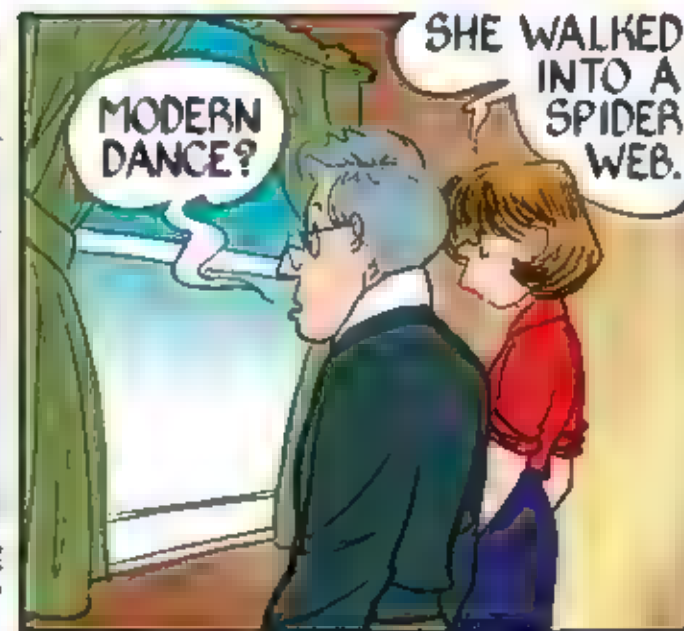
YOU
ALWAYS
HAPPEN TO
HAVE AN
EYEBROW
PENCIL.







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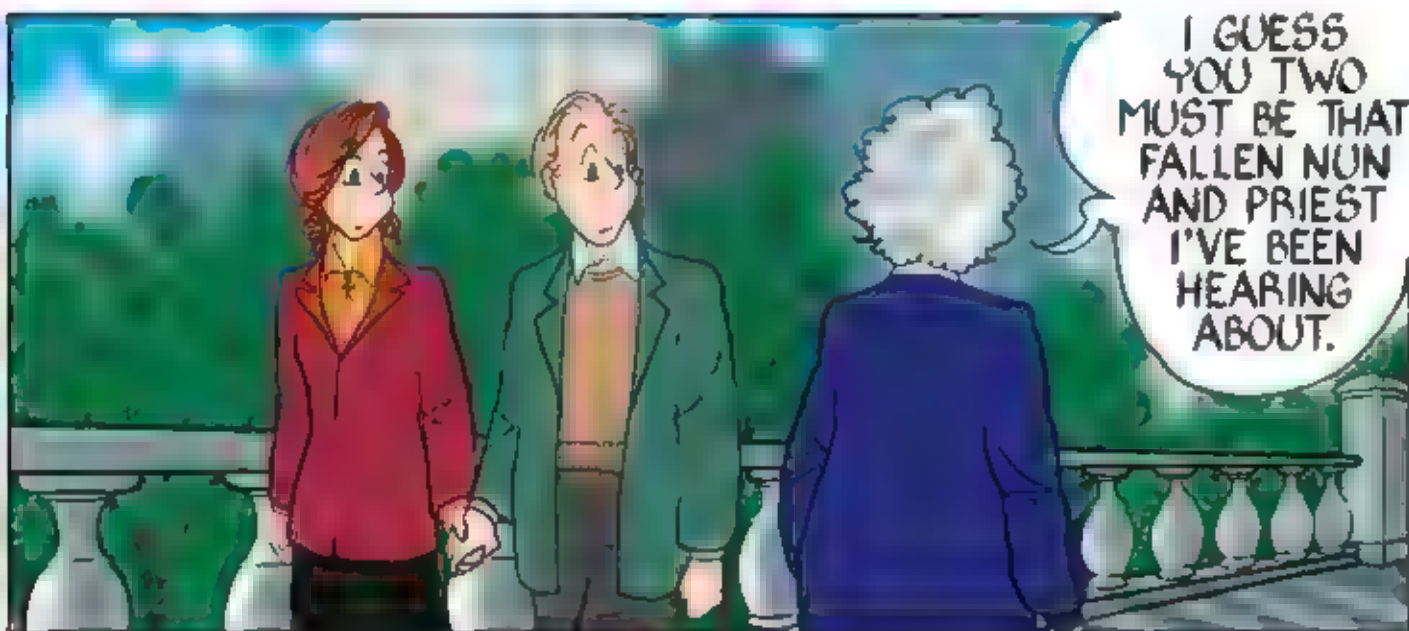
Brooke







9 CHICKWEED LANE





SETH AND I DID EVERYTHING
BUT RAMROD DIANE AND
FRANCIS INTO A HOTEL
ROOM...AND ALL THEY DID
WAS FLEE FROM US AS IF
WE WERE PLAGUE
CARRIERS.



THEY KNEW WHAT WAS
RIGHT FOR EACH OTHER...
...I WAS JUST INTRUSIVE
AND SORDID AND VULGAR.



I WOULDN'T USE
THE WORD
"JUST."



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OH,
PLEASE,
STOP
RAISING
MY
SPIRITS.



Brooke



YOU'RE DEMURE AND GUTSY,
SWEET AND TART, DULCET
AND CLARION, REFINED AND
VULGAR, ART AND ARTIST...
TO ME YOU ARE EVERYTHING
IN PERFECT SYNCHRONY.



THAT WAS FOR YOU...
...THIS IS FOR YOUR
COLLEAGUE
AT JUILLIARD.



AMOS, WHAT'S
THAT ON YOUR
NECK?



A HICKEY.

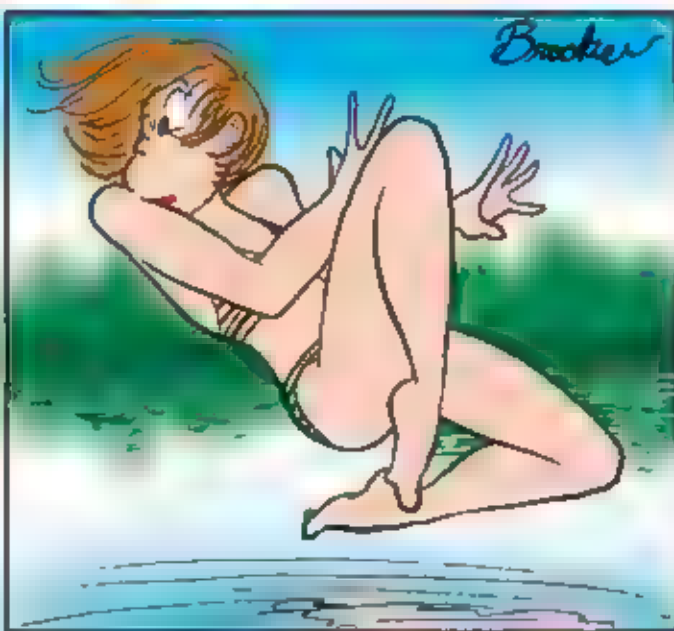
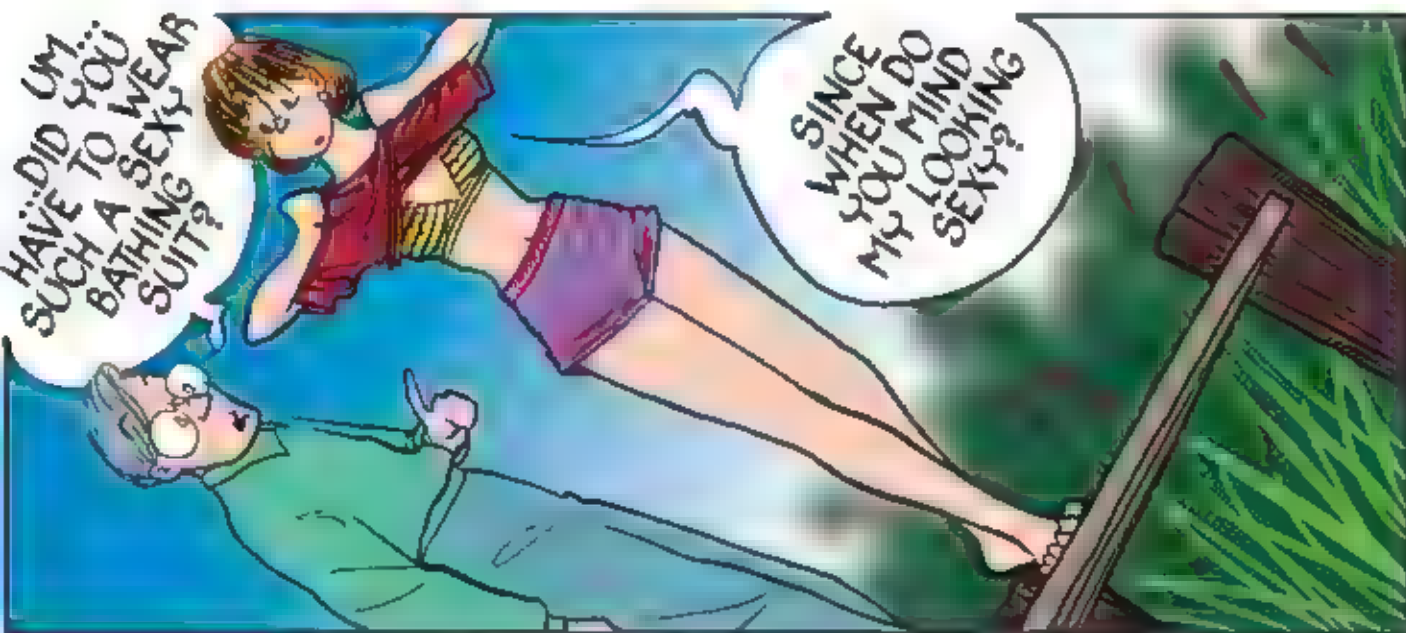
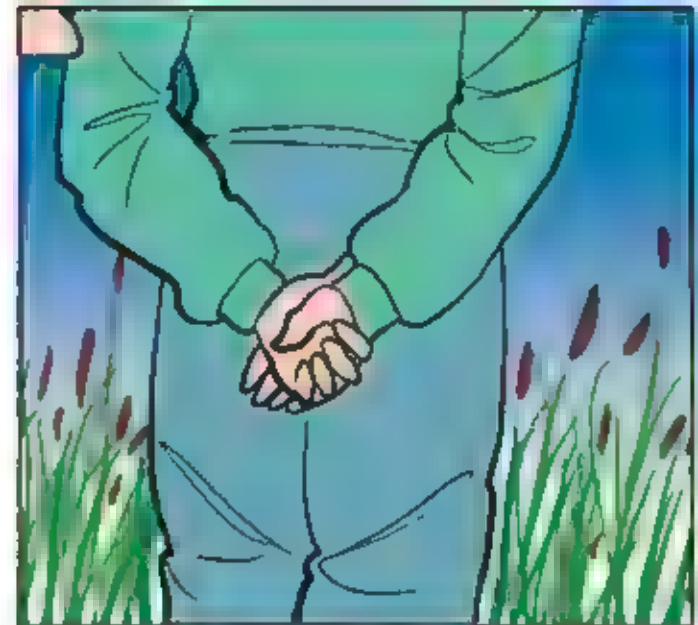
Booker

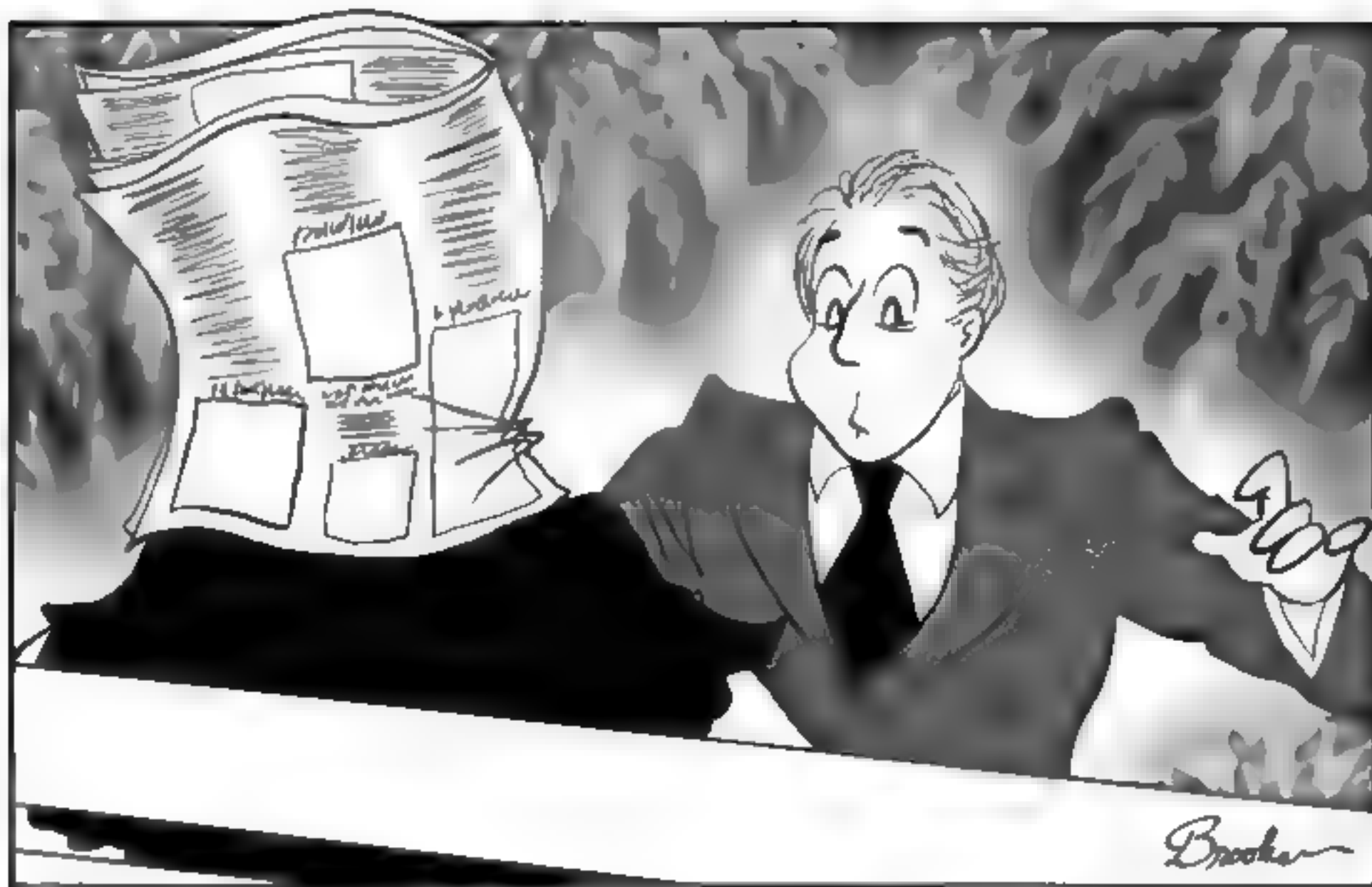
I DON'T KNOW WHY IT HAS
TAKEN ME THIS LONG TO ASK YOU...
IT'S NOT AS IF I'VE BEEN WAITING
FOR A SIGN FROM
HEAVEN...

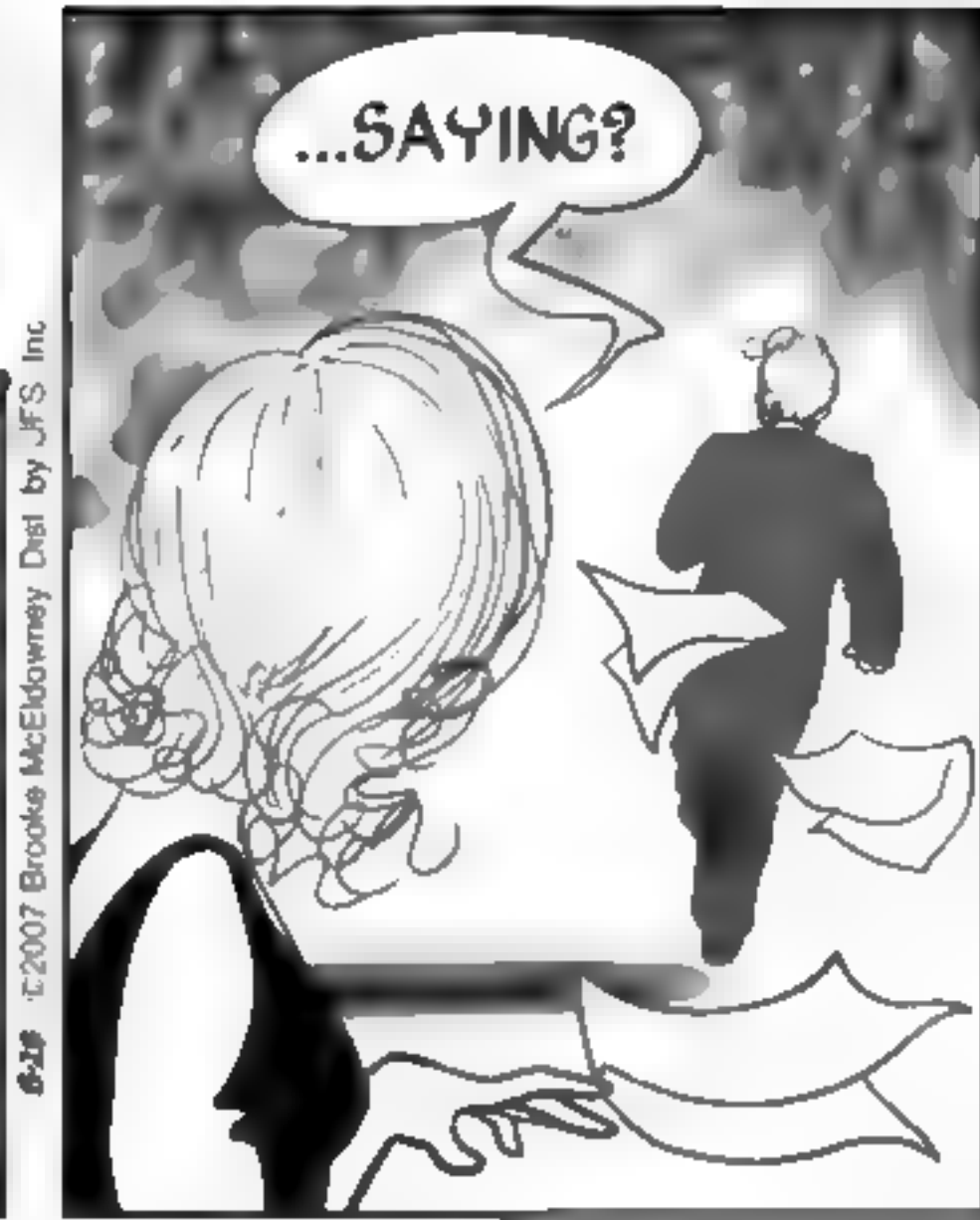




9 CHICKWEED LANE









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DIANE, IT'S ME...I'M DRIVING
TO NEW HAMPSHIRE...SORRY
I LEFT THE PARK SO
ABRUPTLY, BUT I THINK
IT'S IMPORTANT.

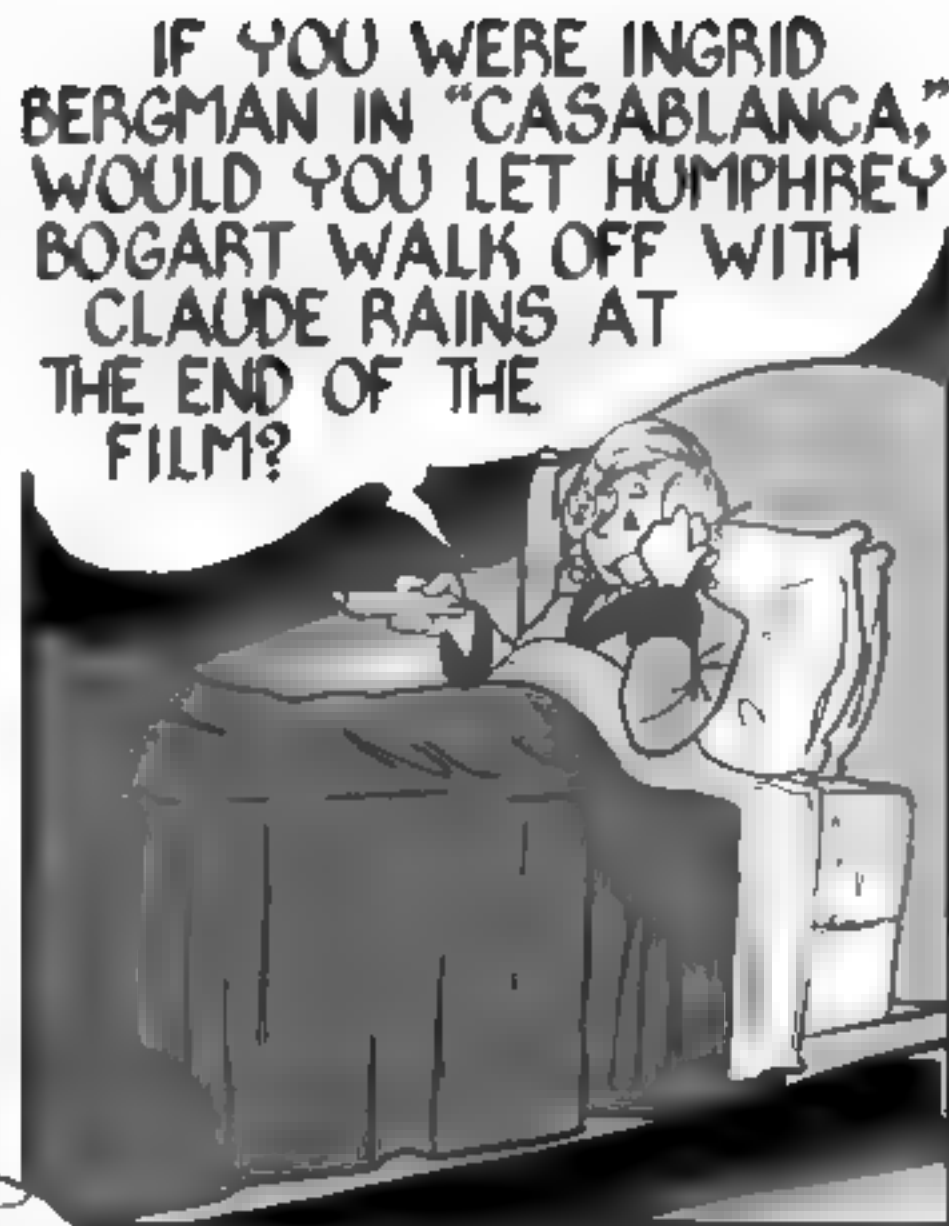
HOW
ARE YOU
DOING?

I'M TRYING TO CATCH UP
ON MY SLEEP...WE WERE UP
UNTIL SUNRISE. BY THE
WAY, WOULD YOU LIKE
TO FINISH THAT SENTENCE
YOU BEGAN IN THE PARK?...
...THE ONE ABOUT
DOING YOU
AN HONOR?

CAN YOU
HOLD THAT
THOUGHT
UNTIL
I GET
BACK?

I'LL HOLD
THE FIRST
PART IF
YOU HOLD
THE LAST.

I WISH
YOU WERE
HERE.



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Brooks



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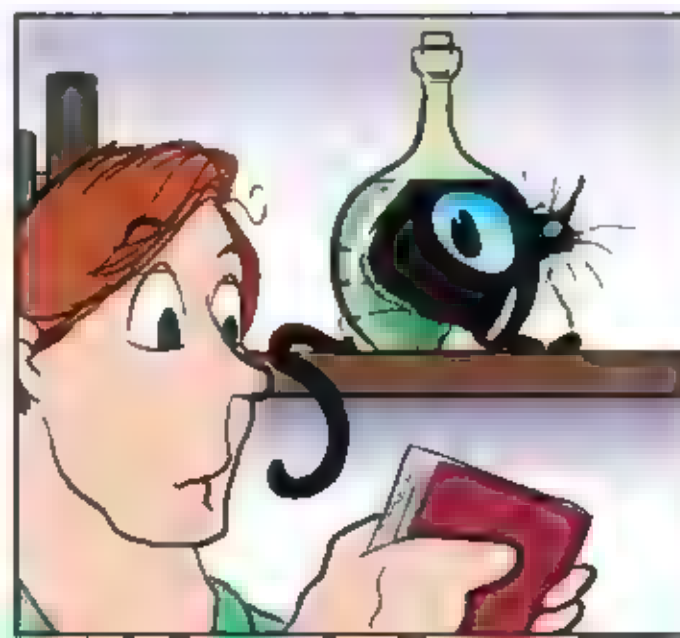
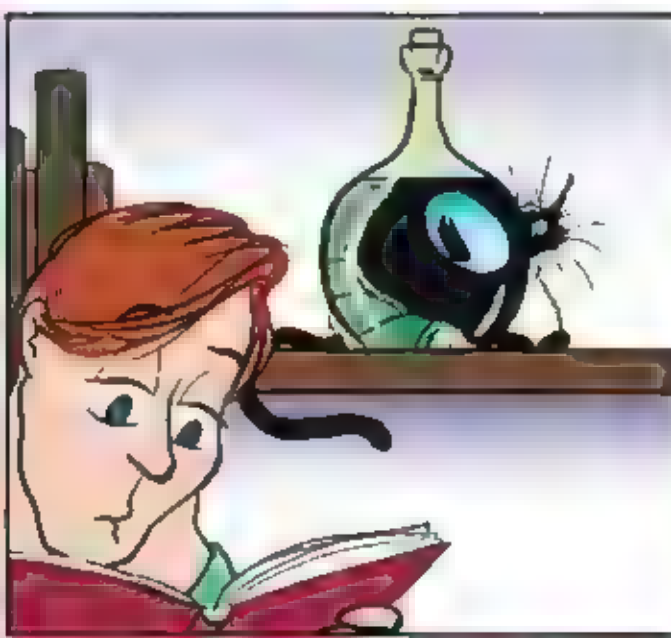
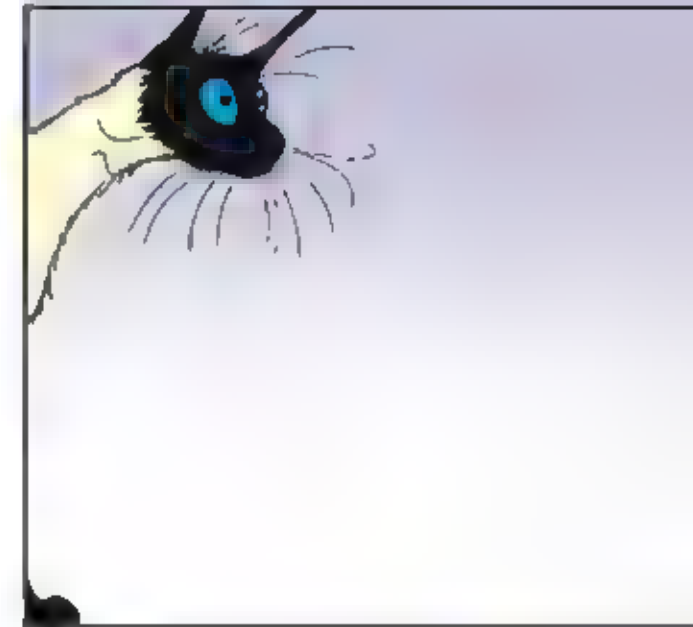
ARE YOU
"DEEP
ORIFICE"?



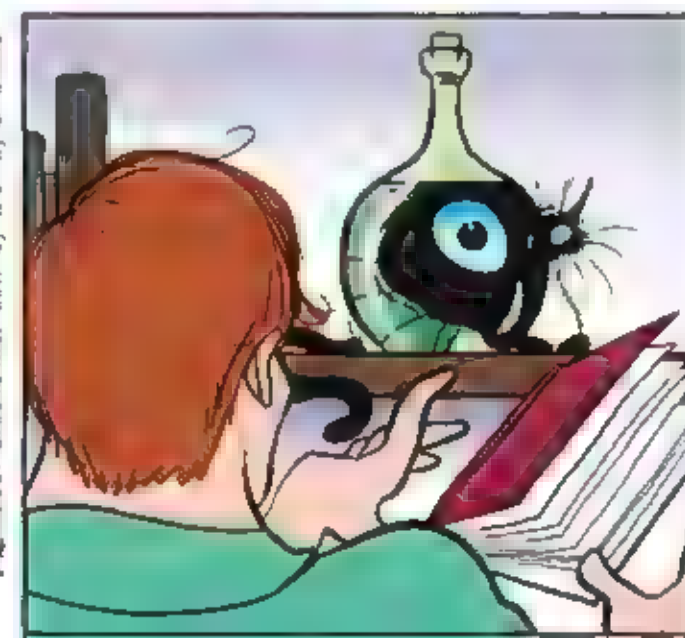
WHAT
GAVE ME
ALWAYS?



9 CHICKWEED LANE



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ONE: IT WOULD NOT HURT
IF SOLANGE WORE A COLLAR
WITH A BELL...
TWO: I MOST
CERTAINLY DO NOT
SCREAM LIKE
A LITTLE
GIRL.

THE THING IS, YOU CAN'T JUST GO AROUND WITH A HOLY WRIT CLUTCHED IN YOUR FIST AND A FEW LAWS TO THUNDER FROM ON HIGH.

WHAT USED TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS GOD IS NOW JUST AN ATMOSPHERIC DISTURBANCE DUE TO A COLD FRONT PUSHING A LOW PRESSURE TROUGH OUT TO SEA.



Brooke

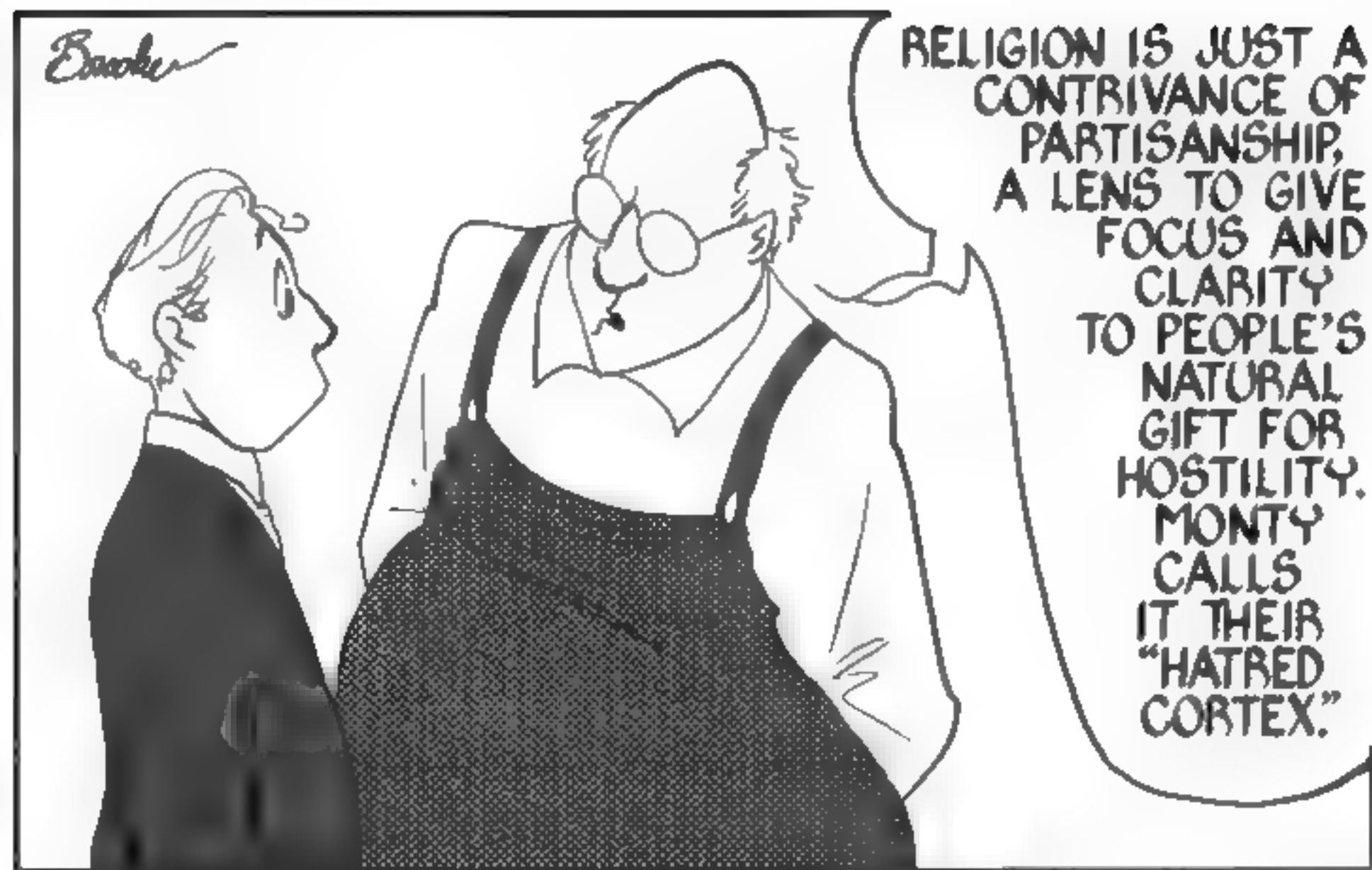
A BURNING BUSH IS RAPID OXIDATION...HANDWRITING ON THE WALL IS JUST A SANS SERIF FONT.

BUT WHY DID HE GO TO THE TABLOIDS?



EVEN A DEITY HAS TO MOVE WITH THE TIMES...
...TO GO WHERE PEOPLE WORSHIP NOW, IN THE TEN-ITEMS-OR-LESS LINE.





THE TABLOIDS CAN'T
BE THE NEW
PROVENANCE
OF GOD'S
WORD!

MONTY
BEGS TO
DIFFER.



THEY COMMAND THE FULL,
UNQUESTIONING ATTENTION
OF ALL WHO PASS.
AND THE FACES THAT
APPEAR IN THOSE PAGES
ARE FIGURES OF REVERENCE,
WORSHIP AND VOYEURISTIC
FASCINATION.



WHAT BETTER SITUATION
FOR MONTY TO GET OUT
HIS MESSAGE...EVEN IF
IT MUST
BE CURTAILED.

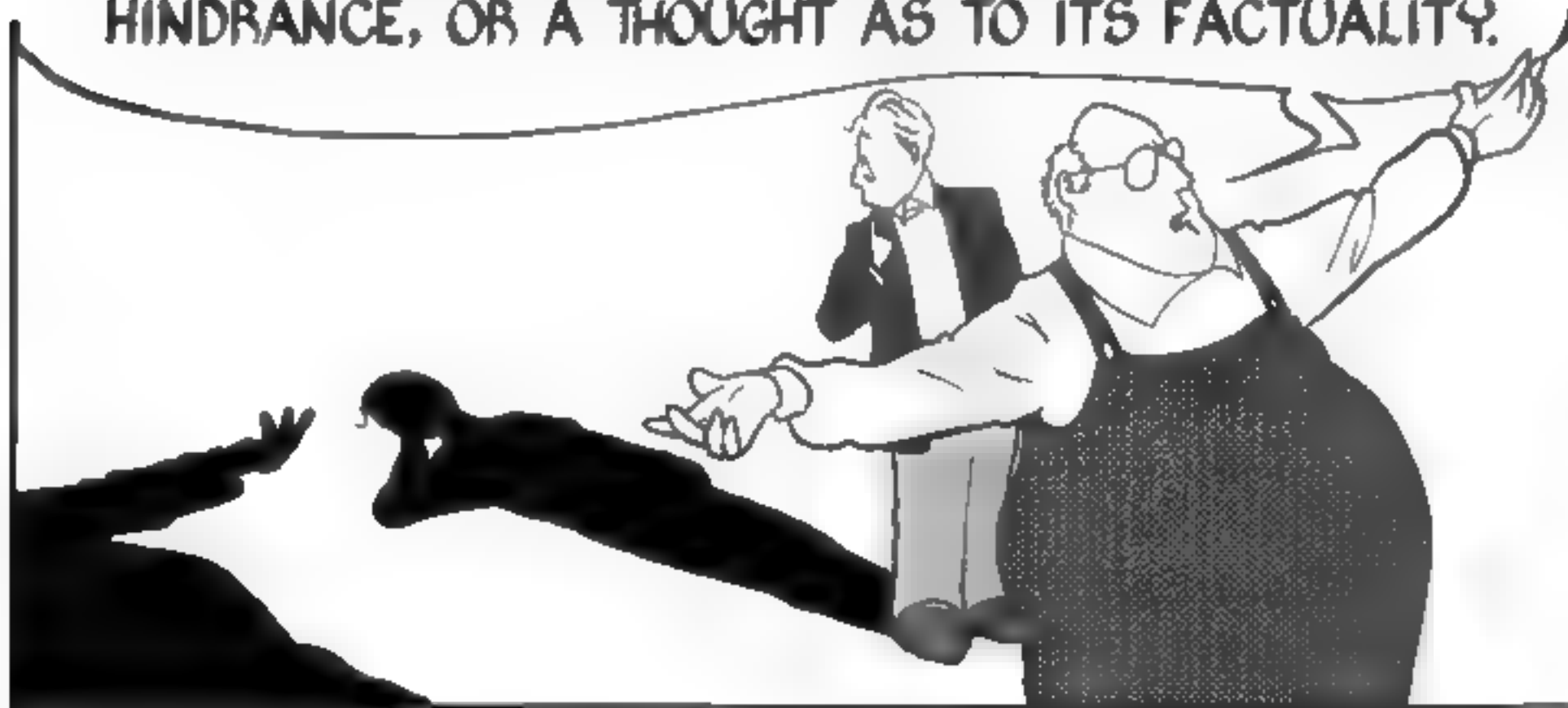
WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



THAT TEN-ITEMS-OR-LESS
RESTRICTION FORCED HIM
TO DROP THE ALL-
IMPORTANT ELEVENTH
COMMANDMENT ABOUT
DAILY FLOSSING.



AND SO IT WAS THAT MONTY CAME UNTO ME. "THORAX, OLD MAN," HE SAID, "I WANT YOU TO BE MY LEAK. YEA, VERILY, YOU WILL BE CALLED DEEP ORIFICE, AND YOU WILL DISSEMINATE CONTRIVED SWILL TO THE PRESS, WHO WILL REPEAT IT WITHOUT LET OR HINDRANCE, OR A THOUGHT AS TO ITS FACTUALITY."



"AND VERILY IT WILL BE JUICY, AND THE WORD OF MONTY WILL SPREAD OVER THE LAND, AND MONTY'S FAME WILL MULTIPLY."

THAT'S
WHAT HE
SAID?

HE ALSO MADE A
LITTLE PROMISE
ABOUT MY
LOINS, BUT
IT'S KIND OF
PERSONAL.



Brooke

AND SO IT WAS THAT
I BECAME MONTY'S LEAK...
...THE SECRET SOURCE
OF ALL THINGS
MONTY.



Booker

Brrrrr....
Brrrrr....



DEEP ORIFICE...



I HAVE TO TAKE THIS...
...IT'S MATTEL.
THEY WANT TO
TALK ACTION
FIGURES.

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MONTY CAN'T GO
DOWN THIS ROAD!
HE CAN LEAVE
HIS MARK WITH-
OUT SUCH
TAWDRY
DISPLAYS.

I'LL
CONFER
WITH
HIM.

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MONTY HAS
TAKEN YOUR
ADVICE TO
HEART.

Brooke

THE HOLLYWOOD
MONTY TO
ANNIHILATE
HUMAN RACE

UM...
...THIS
ISN'T
QUITE
WHAT
I MEANT.

OH, WELL NOW
YOU'RE JUST
TRYING TO
MICROMANAGE.

HUMANKIND
TO BE
WIPE OUT
THURSDAY
JEN AND BRAD
BACK TOGETHER!

9 CHICKWEED LANE

OVER THE YEARS,
THE QUANTUM RIFT
IN MY TRACTOR SHED
AVALIED ME ACCESS
TO MANY AREAS OF
THE GALAXY...



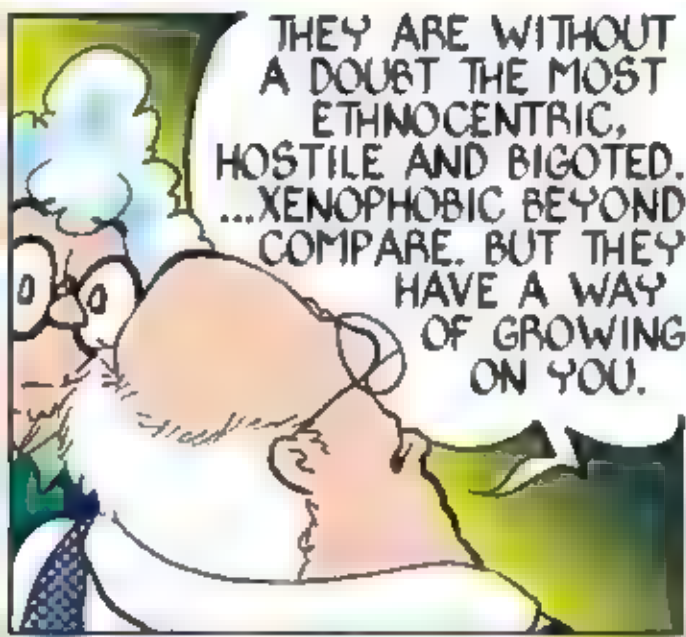
...MANY STRANGE
AND FAR-FLUNG
BEYOND HUMAN
IMAGINATION.

AND IN THE PROCESS, I HAVE
MET LIFE-FORMS OF THE MOST
DIVERSE AND
EXOTIC
KIND.



BUT NONE HAVE BEEN
AS BIZARRE AS THE
CREATURES KNOWN
AS "THE ODDLY
TOED MUCOID
BEINGS OF
HYGRUNT VI."

THEY ARE WITHOUT
A DOUBT THE MOST
ETHNOCENTRIC,
HOSTILE AND BIGOTED.
...XENOPHOBIC BEYOND
COMPARE. BUT THEY
HAVE A WAY
OF GROWING
ON YOU.



SO IN TIME
YOU BECAME
FRIENDLY?



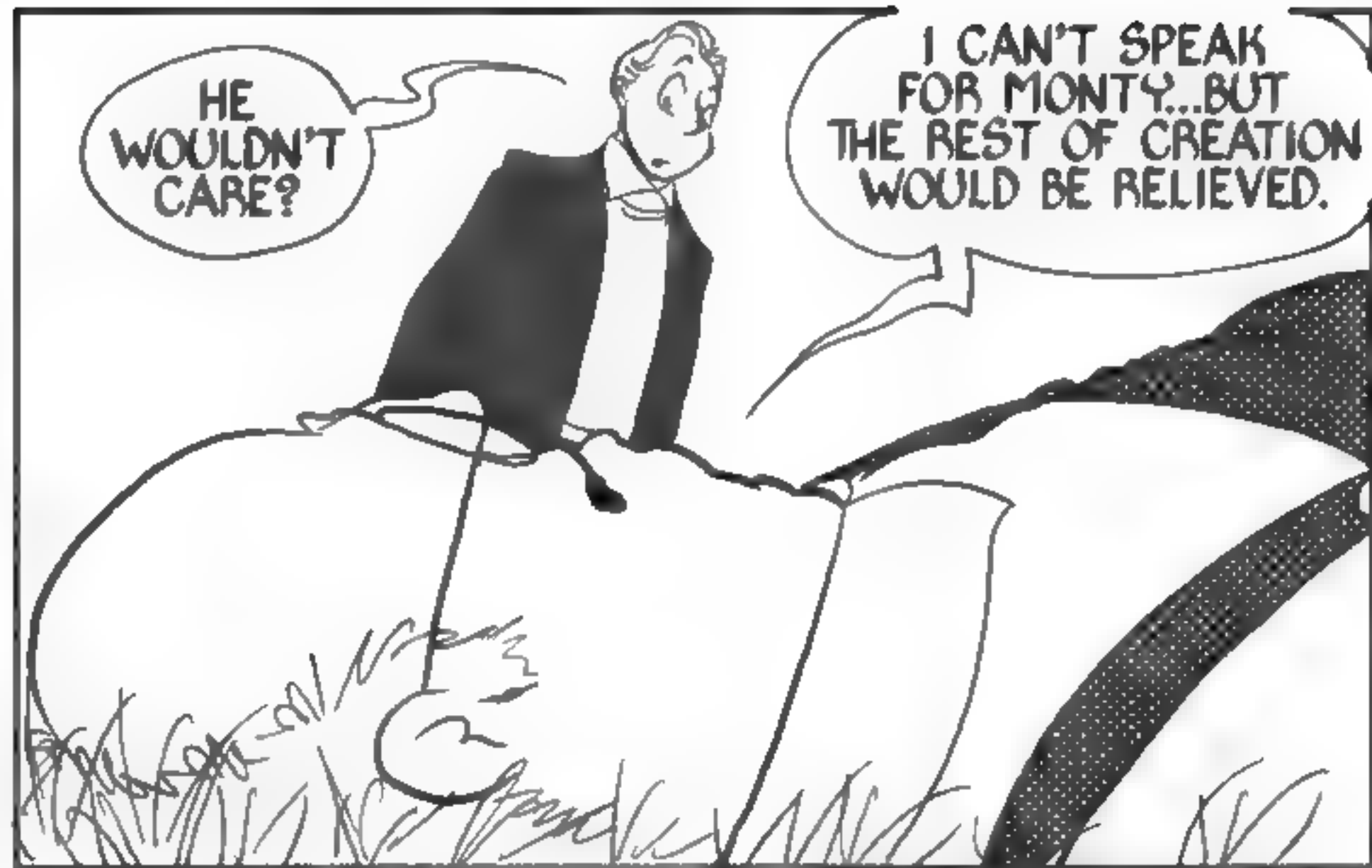
NO...THEY JUST HAVE A WAY
OF GROWING ON
YOU.



WIPING OUT HUMANKIND IS NOT ALL THAT COMPLICATED,
REALLY. YOU'VE DONE ALL THE LEG WORK.
THE PLANET IS ON THE VERGE OF BEING
NOTHING BUT A HAVEN FOR COCKROACHES.
ALL MONTY HAS TO DO IS GIVE IT A LITTLE
NUDGE.



YOU'D ALL
BE HISTORY,
IF ANYONE WERE
LEFT TO WRITE IT.



HE
WOULDN'T
CARE?

I CAN'T SPEAK
FOR MONTY...BUT
THE REST OF CREATION
WOULD BE RELIEVED.

A black and white cartoon panel. On the left, a man in a dark suit and white shirt is shown from the chest up, looking extremely distressed with his hands clutching his head. On the right, a woman wearing glasses, a white collared shirt, and dark overalls stands with her hands on her hips, looking at him. A speech bubble from the man contains the text.

WE'RE ON THE EDGE
OF EXTINCTION, AND
NOBODY NOTICES.

Brooke

A black and white cartoon panel. Two dark silhouetted figures, an adult and a child, are walking away from the viewer down a winding path. The path is flanked by bushes and leads into a landscape of rolling hills and trees under a sky with clouds. A speech bubble from the child contains the text.

A HUMAN BEING'S NATURAL
HABITAT IS THE EDGE OF EXTINCTION.
IT HAS BEEN EVER SINCE
YOU ALL EVOLVED.



IT'S ON MY SHOULDERS.
I HAVE TO FORGE THE LINK,
REBLAZE THE PATH OF
COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN
GOD AND
HUMANITY.

AND
HOW
WILL
YOU DO
THAT?



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I SHALL
REJOIN
THE
PRIEST-
HOOD.

THAT'S WHAT
MONTY REFERS TO
AS A TOLL CALL.



BRRREEEEP...

WHAT'S
THAT?



oh...
...um...
...my
girl-
friend.

THIS WILL BE
GOOD...MONTY
CAN HOLD OFF
WORLD-WIDE
ANNIHILATION
FOR THAT.



DIANE...THERE'S SOMETHING
IMPORTANT I HAVE TO
TELL YOU...



GLORP...

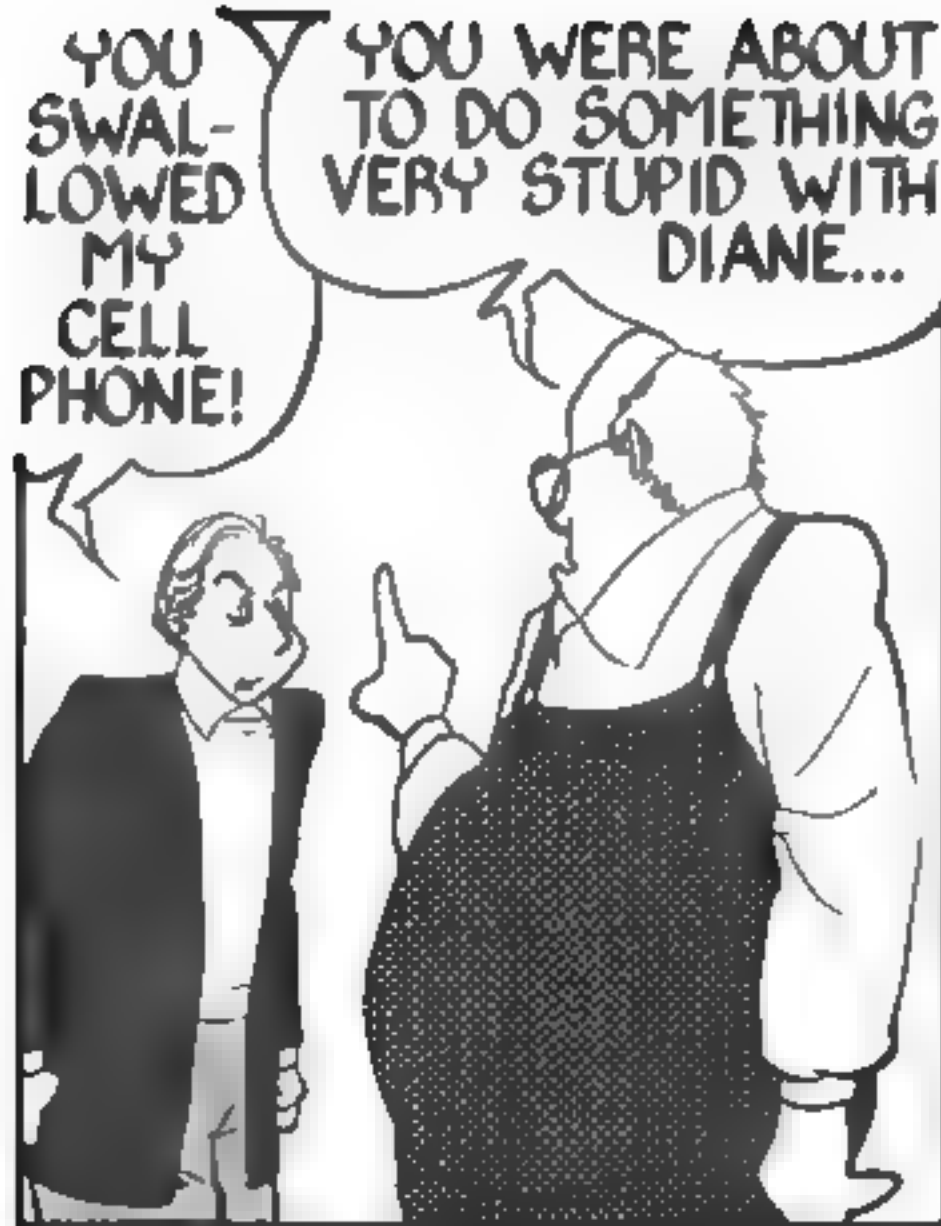


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WHY AM
I HEARING
MUZAK?

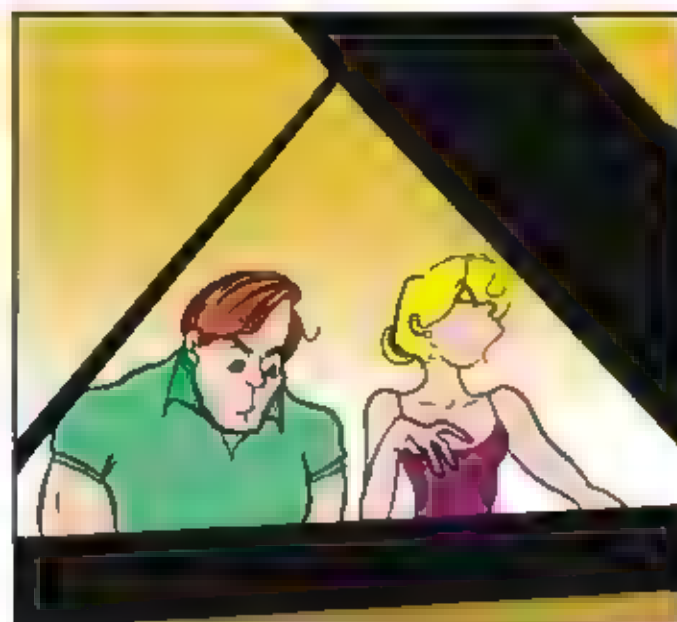
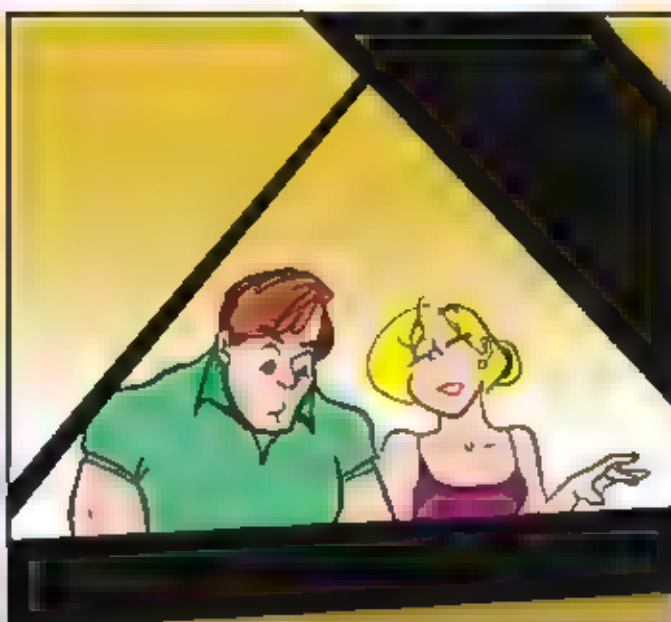
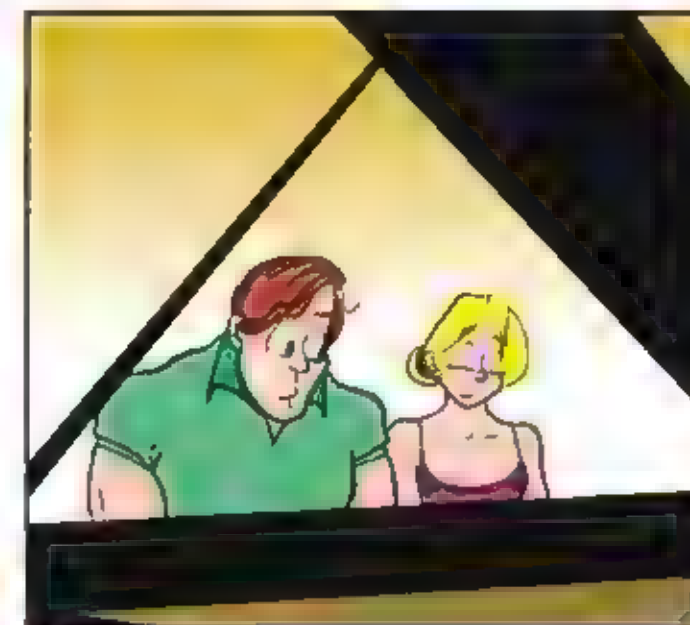
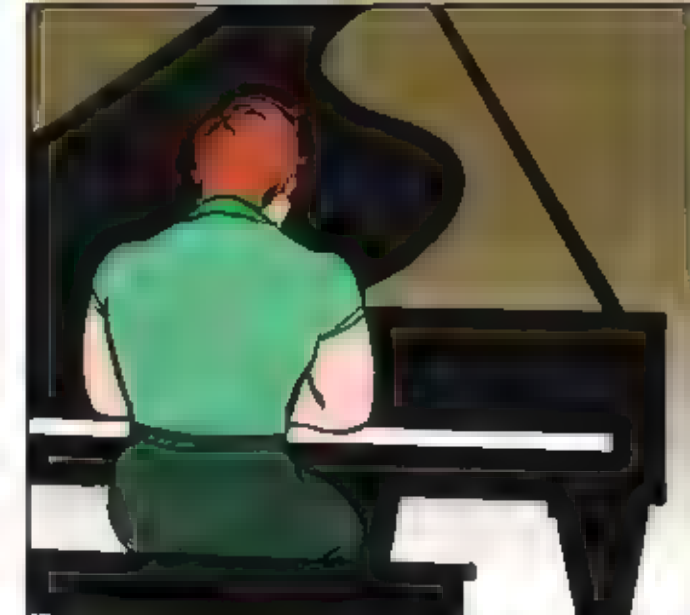


Brooks

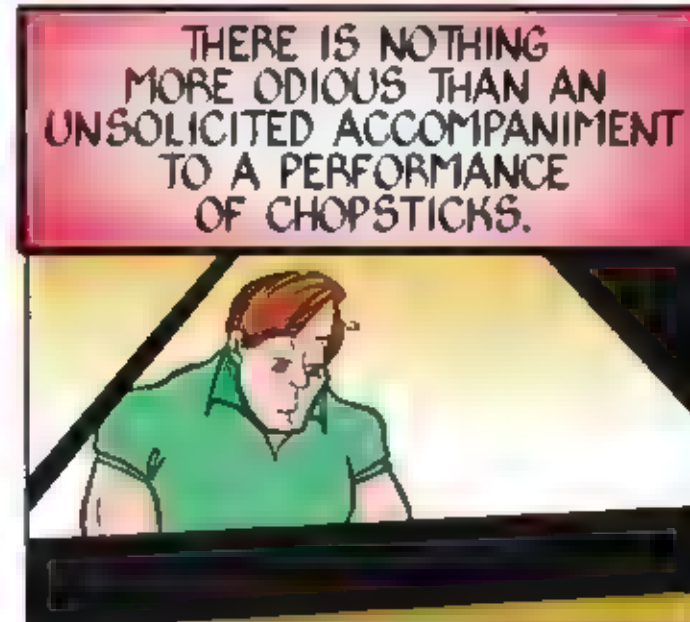


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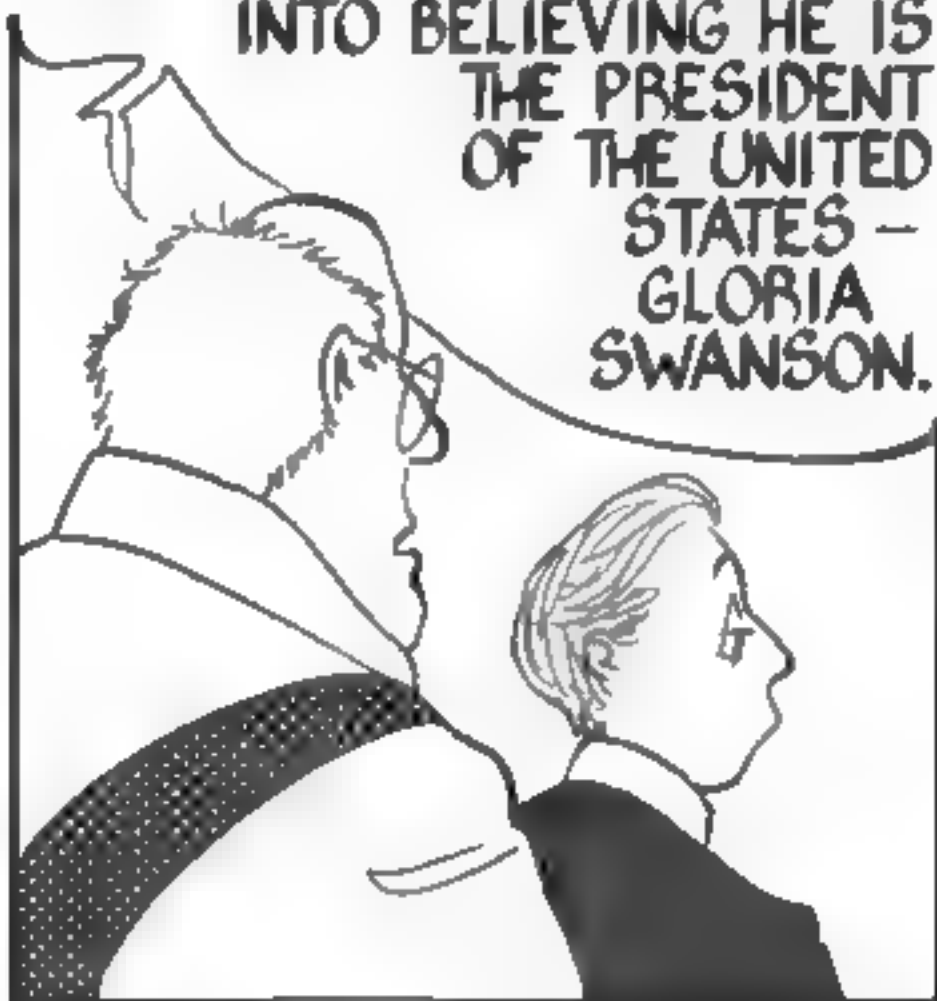
THERE IS NOTHING
MORE ODIOS THAN AN
UNSOLICITED ACCOMPANIMENT
TO A PERFORMANCE
OF CHOPSTICKS.

YOU WOULD BECOME A
PRIEST AGAIN JUST TO
SAVE THE WORLD
FROM MONTY'S
WRATH?

YOU'RE
THE ONE
WHO SAID HE'S
GOING TO WIPE
OUT HUMANKIND.



BUT WHAT IF, IN FACT, I'M
JUST AN INSANE OLD COOT
WHO HAS DELUDED HIMSELF
INTO BELIEVING HE IS
THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED
STATES -
GLORIA
SWANSON.



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
UNITED
STATES
IS NOT
GLORIA
SWANSON.

CLEARLY
YOU HAVE
NEVER SEEN
HIM IN GOLD
LAME.



Brooke

YOU ARE ABOUT TO RUIN YOUR
LIFE WITH DIANE, ALL IN DEFERENCE
TO THE MAUNDERINGS OF A
CRACKPOT DAIRY FARMER.

ARE YOU
TELLING ME
I'M
CRAZY?

NO, I'M TELLING
YOU I'M CRAZY.

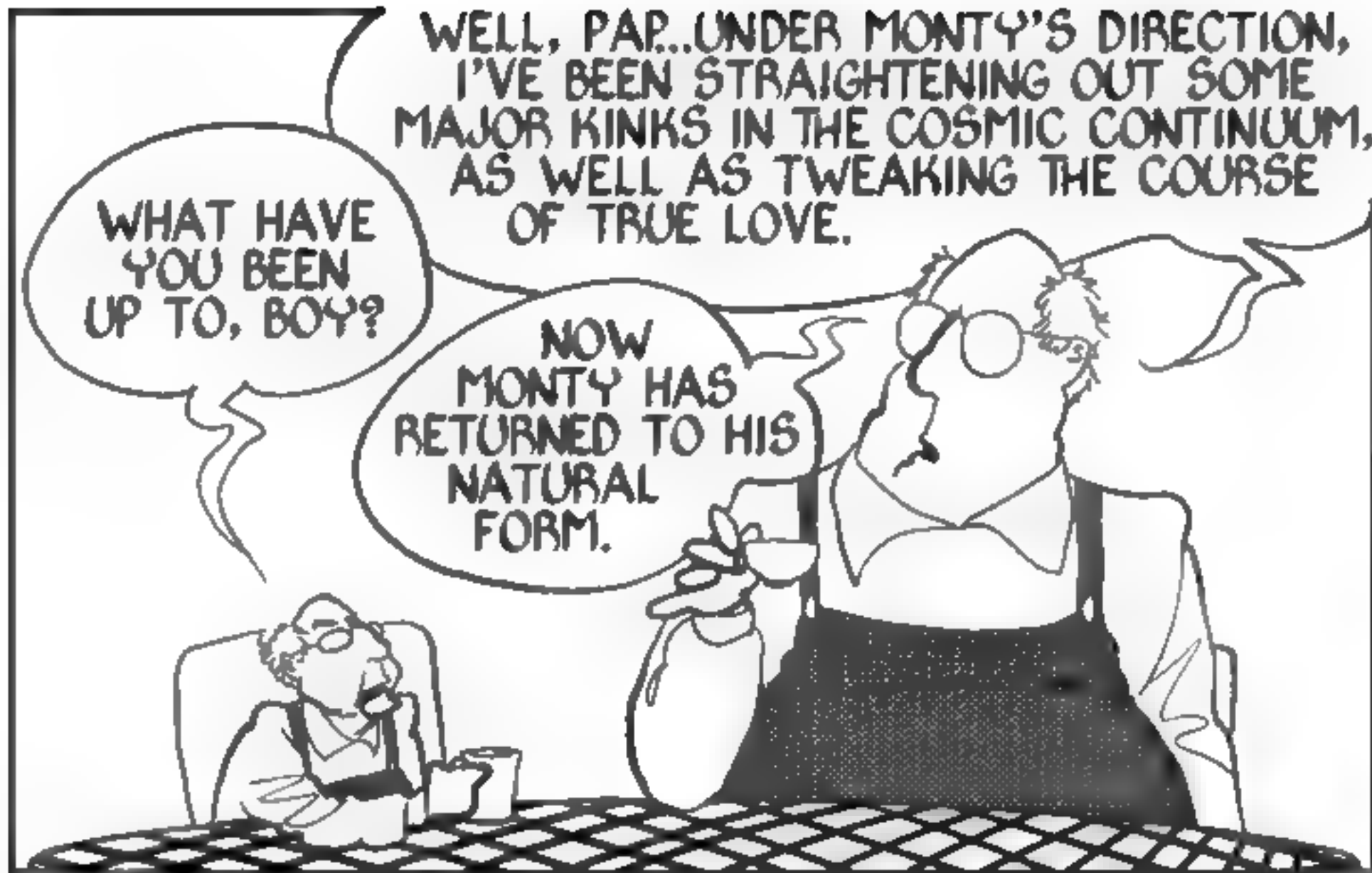
YOU'RE
AN
IDIOT.

MONTY SPEAKS, BUT NO ONE LISTENS.
THEY TALK, BEG, WHEELDE, SUPPLICATE, DEMAND,
THREATEN, PLEAD AND IMPLORE...BUT THEY'RE
NEVER INTERESTED
IN WHAT HE'S
SAYING
TO THEM.

WHAT
IS IT HE'S
SAYING?

Brooke

"SHUT UP!"



FRANCIS HAD KNELT BEFORE
DIANE, AND WAS
JUST ABOUT TO ASK
HER SOMETHING
VERY IMPORTANT,
WHEN HE SAW
A NEWSPAPER
HEADLINE,
AND RAN OFF.
HE DIDN'T
EXPLAIN
WHY...AND
SHE'S BEEN
WAITING FOR
HIM EVER SINCE.
IF I DID THAT,
WOULD YOU
WAIT FOR ME?



NEED
YOU
EVEN
ASK?

YOUR...
YOUR
HAND IS
SORT OF
HURTING
MY RIB
CAGE.

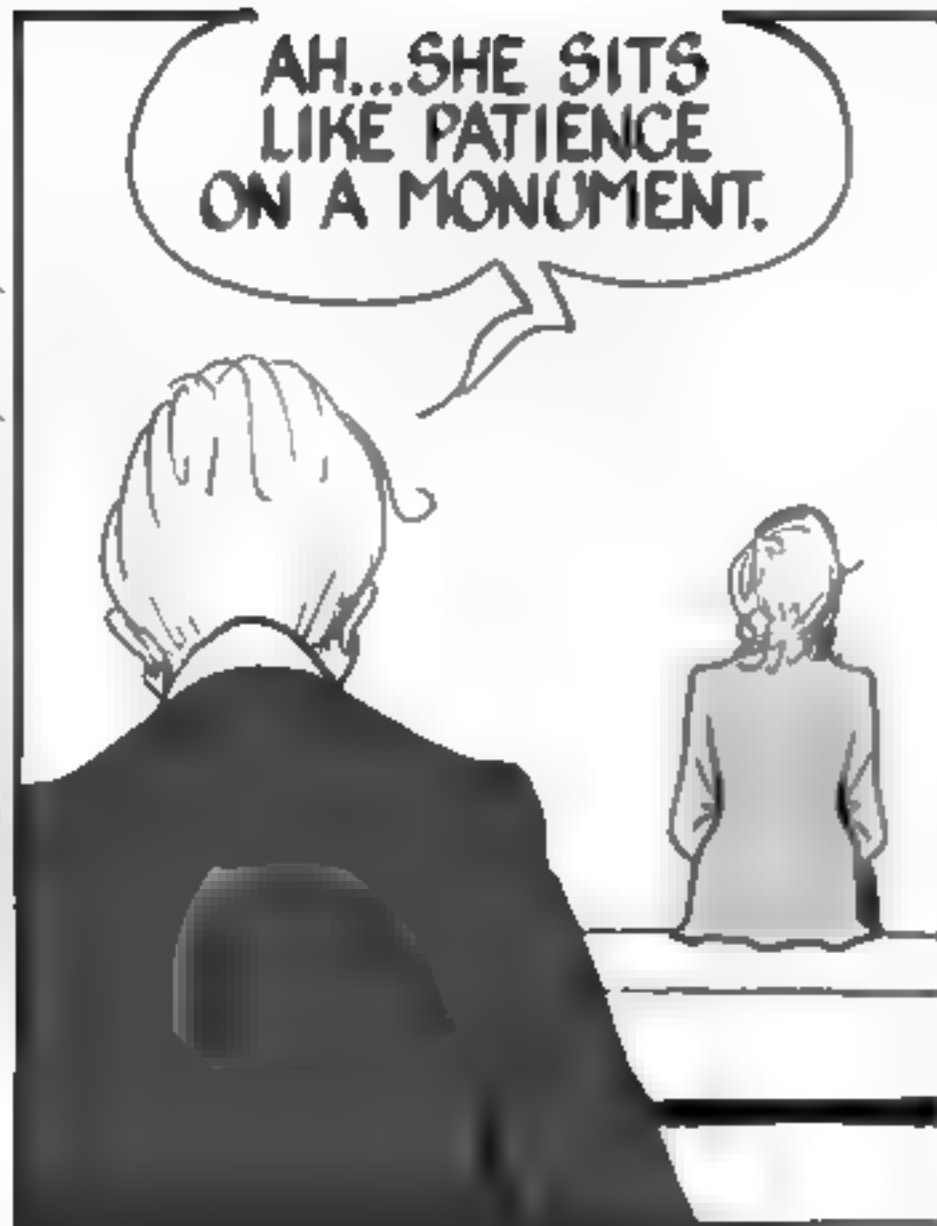


MY
FLYING
BUTTRESS!

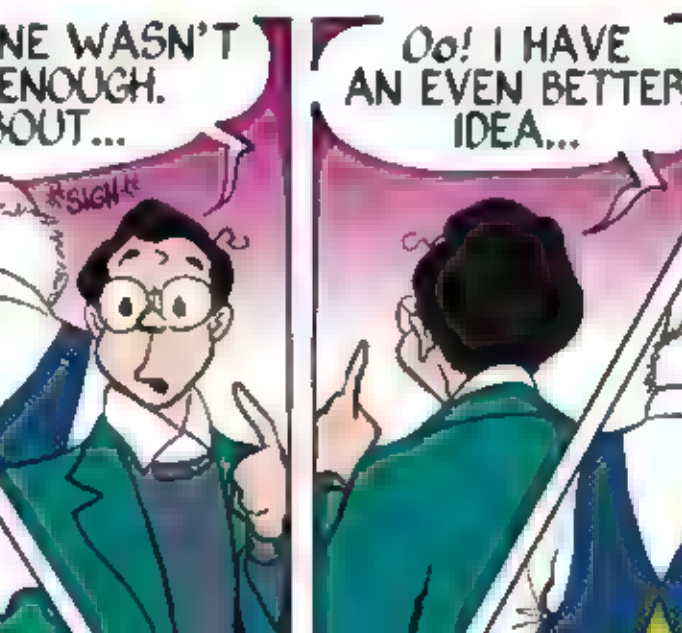
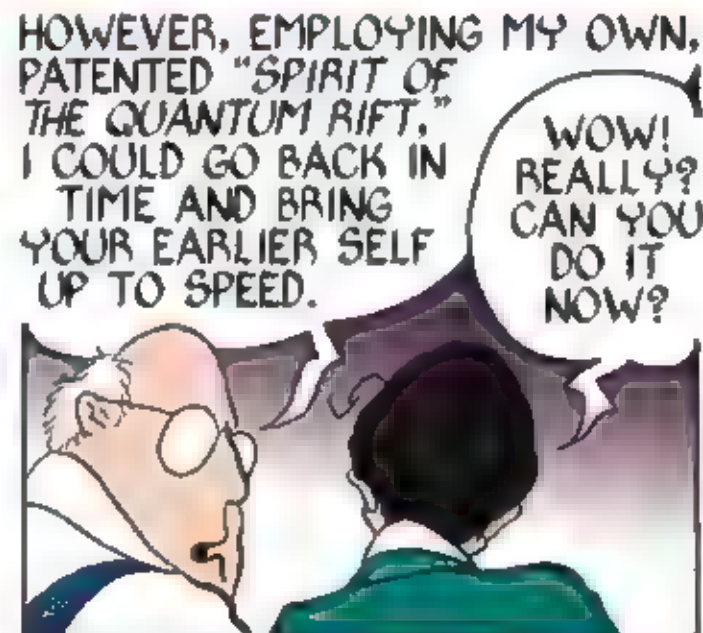
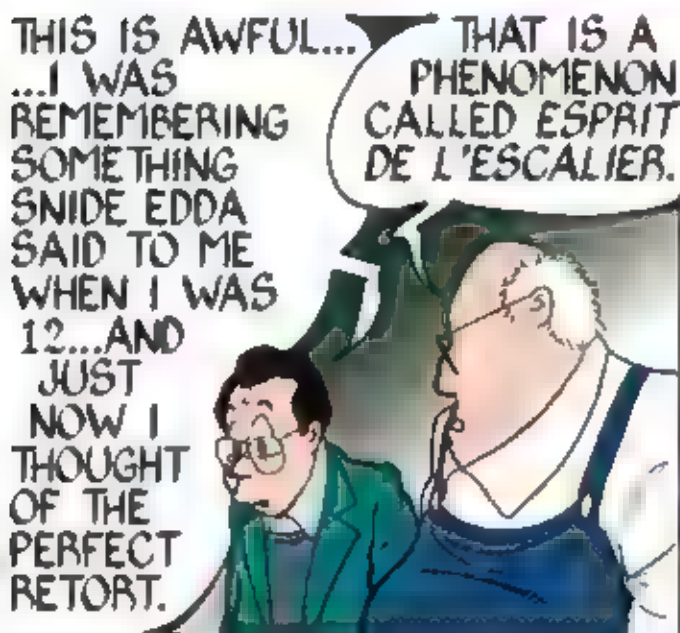
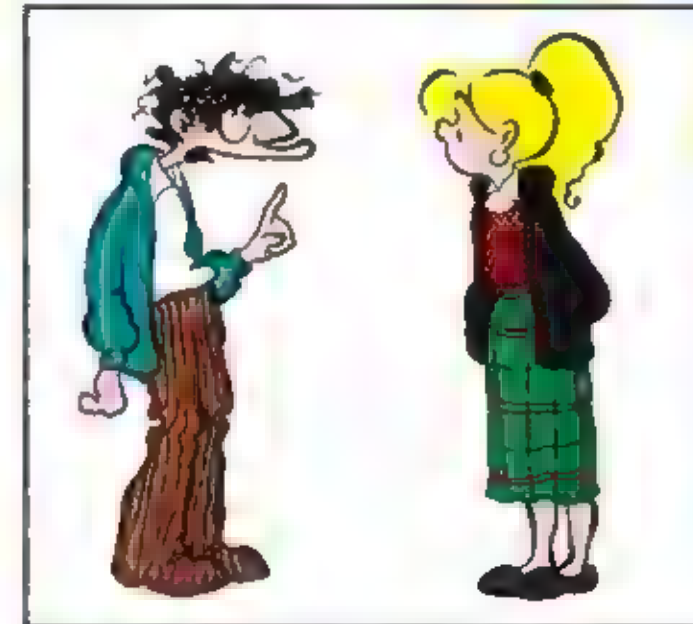
"PATIENCE
ON A
MONUMENT"



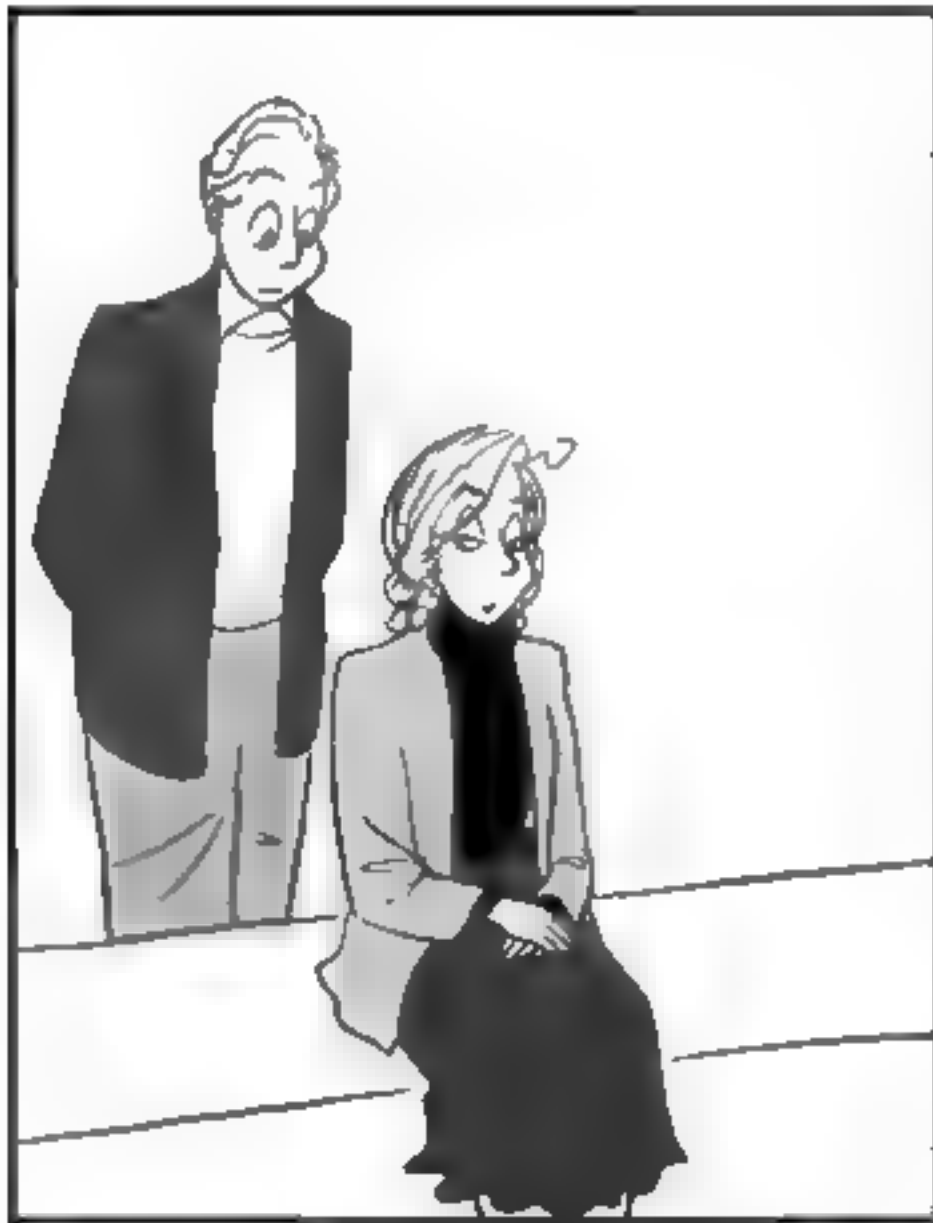
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9 CHICKWEED LANE



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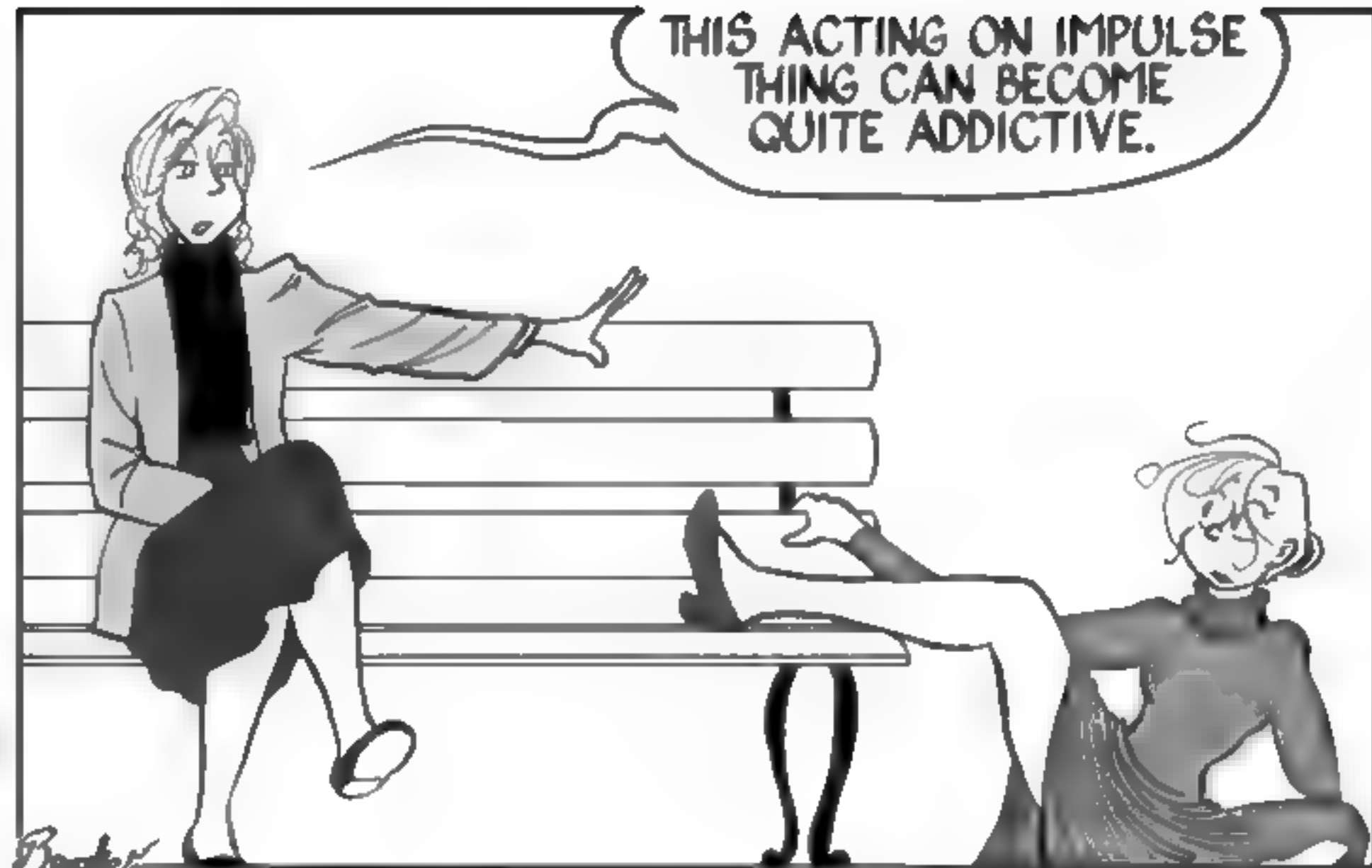
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DIANE?...IT'S SETH. I HEARD
YOU KNOCKED FRANCIS ON
HIS KEISTER, THEN DID THE
SAME THING FOR EDDA.
I JUST WANTED TO SAY
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU'RE
FEELING, AND
IF THERE'S
ANYTHING
I CAN DO,
LET ME
KNOW.



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COME
ON BY
AND I'LL
BE GLAD
TO SHOW
YOU.



UM...NO...
...I DON'T THINK
I'LL DO THAT
RIGHT NOW.

A WISE
DECISION,
MY BOY.



Brooke

IF YOU WERE INGRID
BERGMAN IN "CASABLANCA,"
WOULD YOU LET HUMPHREY
BOGART WALK OFF WITH
CLAUDE RAINS AT
THE END OF THE
FILM?



NO...I'D TACKLE HIM
AROUND THE KNEES
AND BEAR HIM THREE
CHILDREN BEFORE HE
REGAINED HIS
BALANCE.

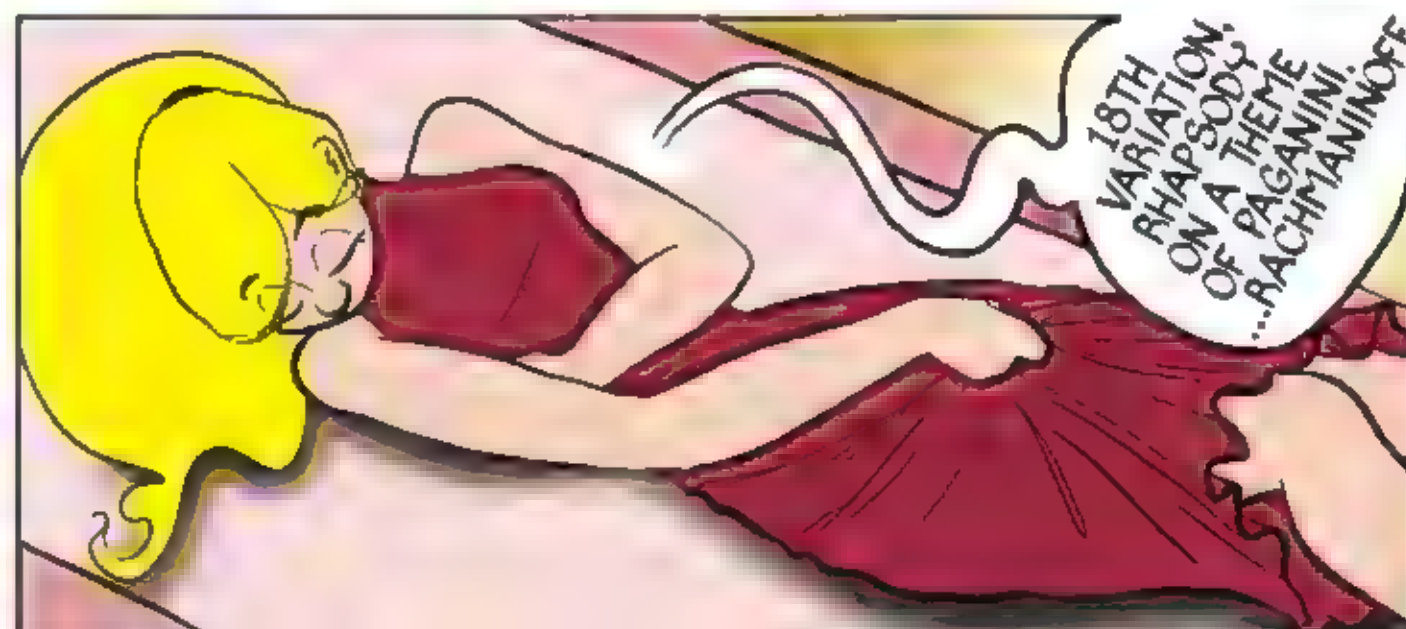
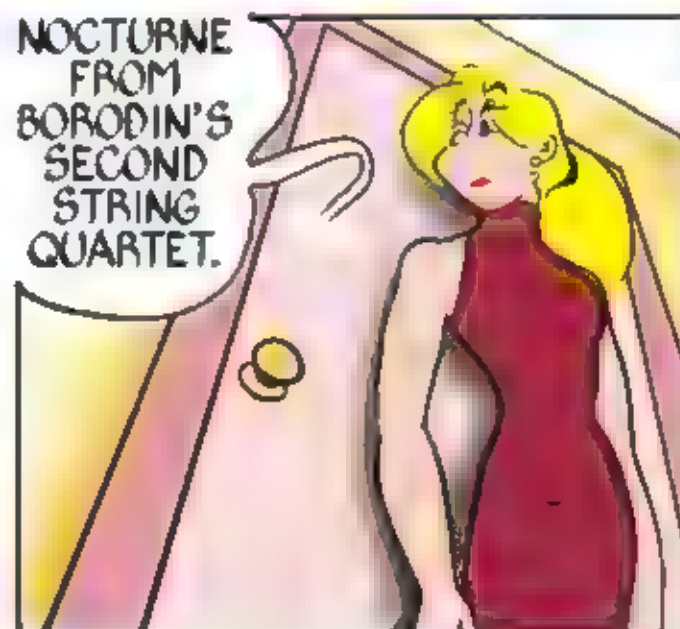
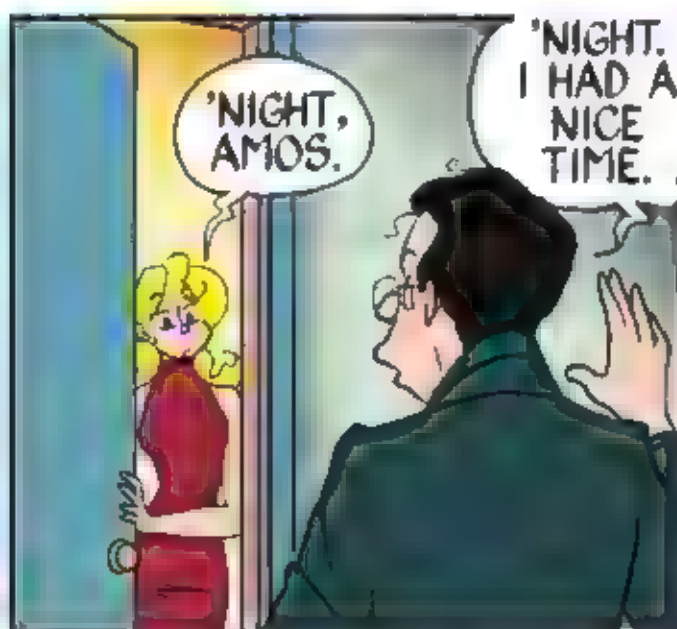
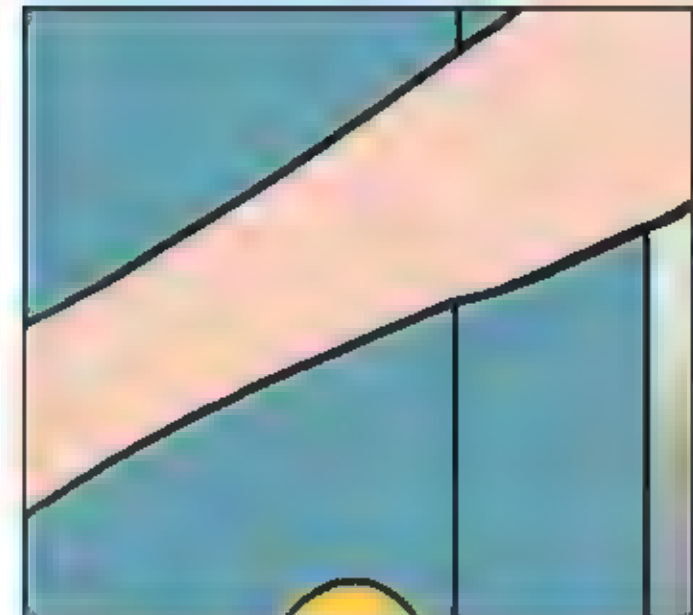


Brooke

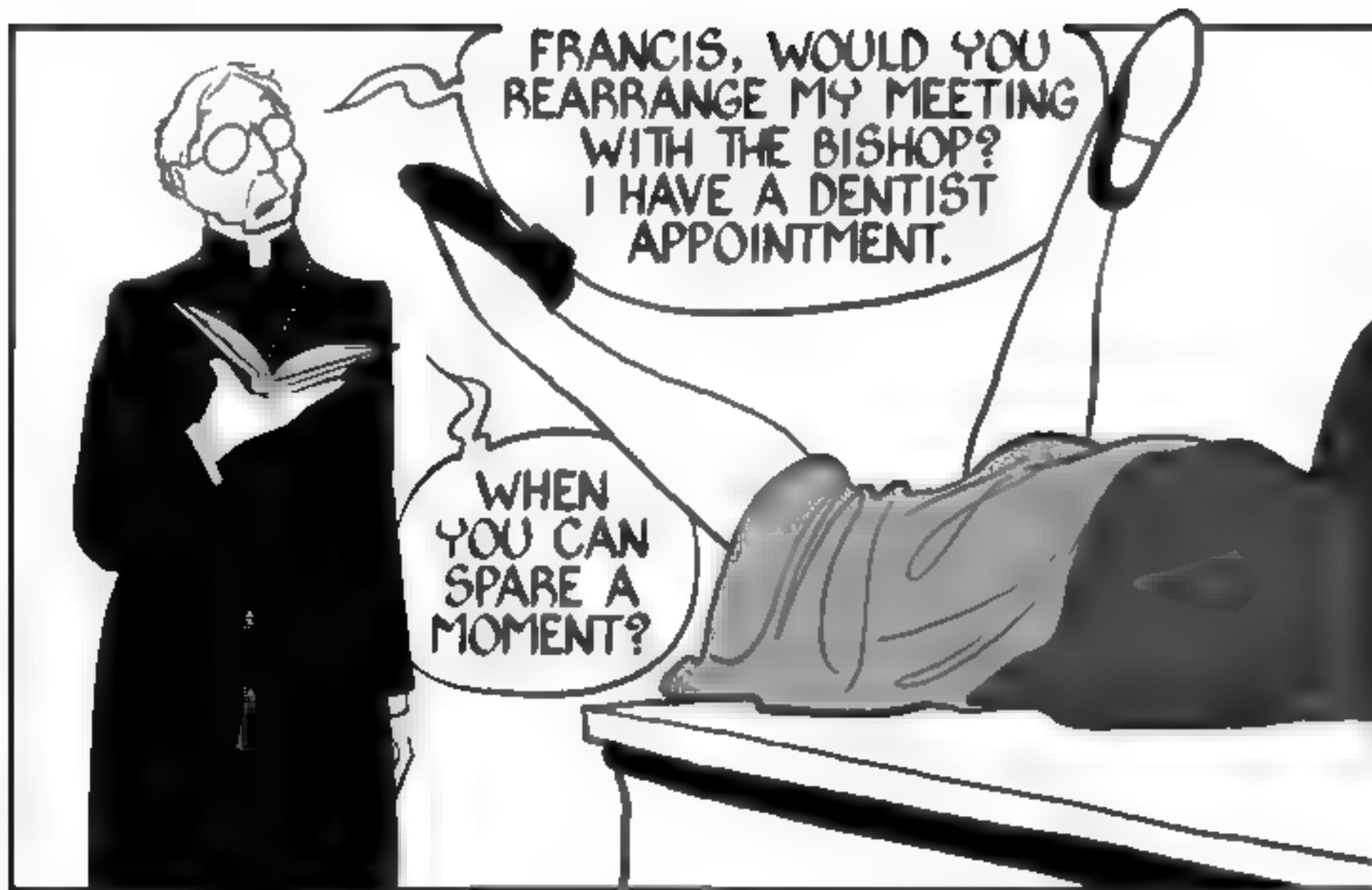




Brooker



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WHO DO
YOU THINK
YOU ARE?
...THE GOD
WHISPERER?
I PREFER
A DEITY WHO
DOESN'T
NEED
SOMEONE
WEARING
A CASSOCK
AND A
WORRIED
EXPRESSION
TO RUN AND
HOLD HIS
HAND.

MY
GOD
CAN
HANDLE
HIS
UNIVERSE.

THAT'S
WHAT
THORAX
TOLD
ME.

SUDDENLY
I'M BEGINNING
TO WARM
UP TO
THIS
THORAX
PERSON.

YOU
HAVEN'T
BEEN
TREATED
TO HIS
HANDS-FREE
PUPPET
SHOW.

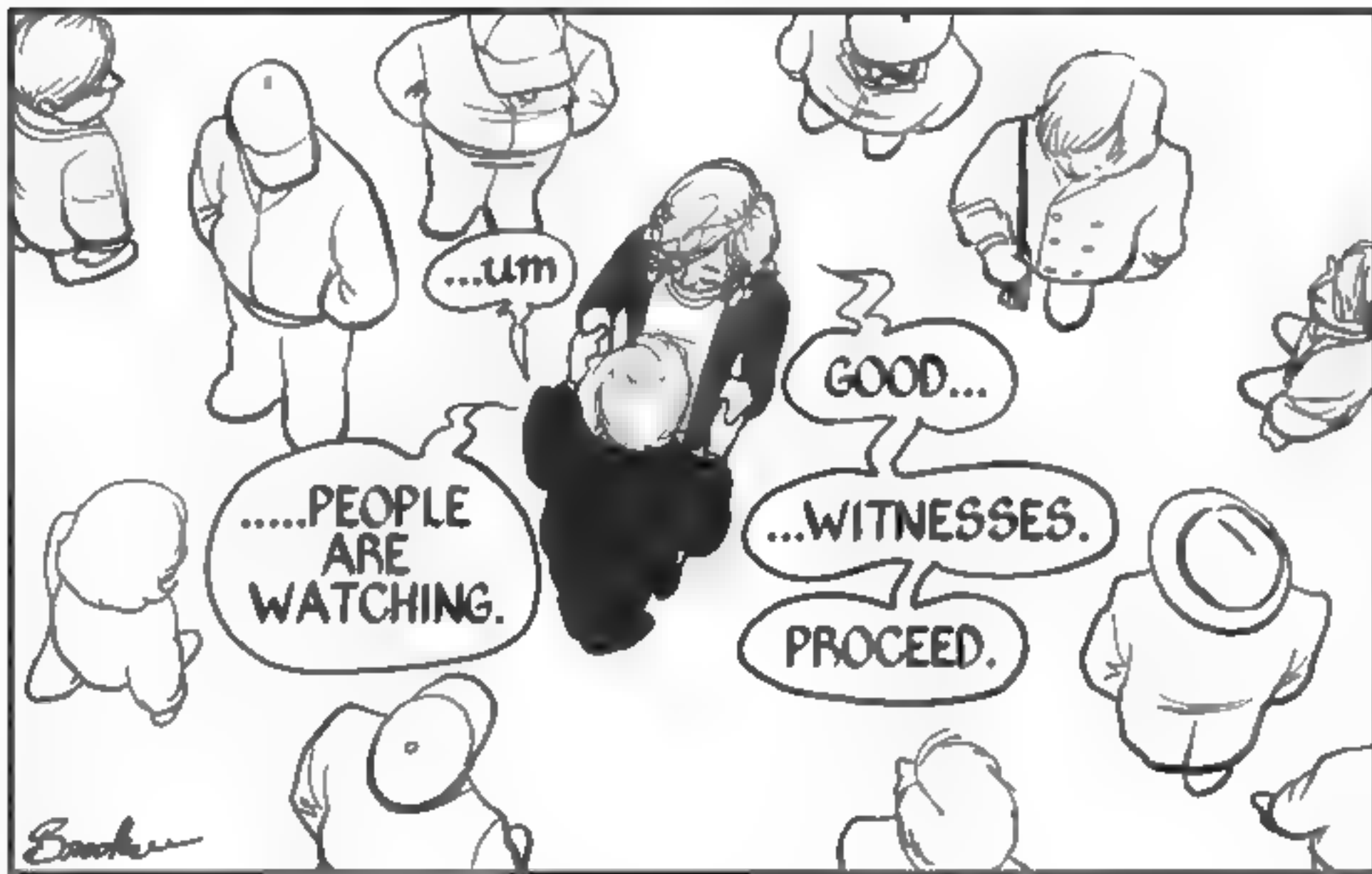
Brooke

WHEN I RETURNED TO YOU,
YOU SHOWED ME YOUR
BACK...AND
LEFT.

NOW
YOU
KNOW
WHAT
IT
FEELS
LIKE.

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I'M SO TERRIBLY SORRY.
...I LOVE YOU WITH ALL
MY BEING...AND...
...AND...



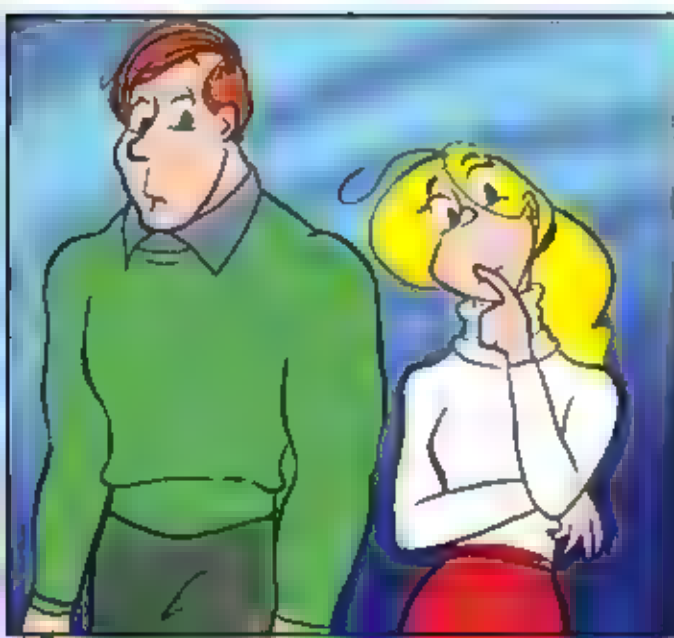
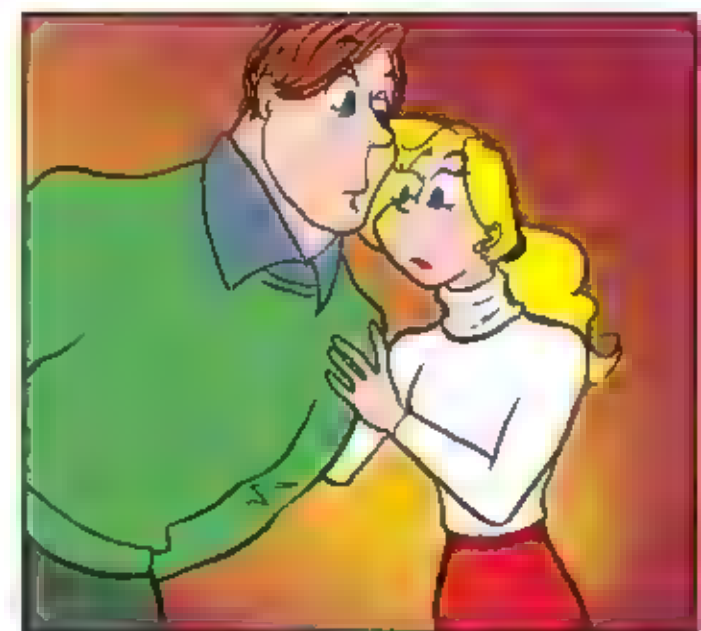
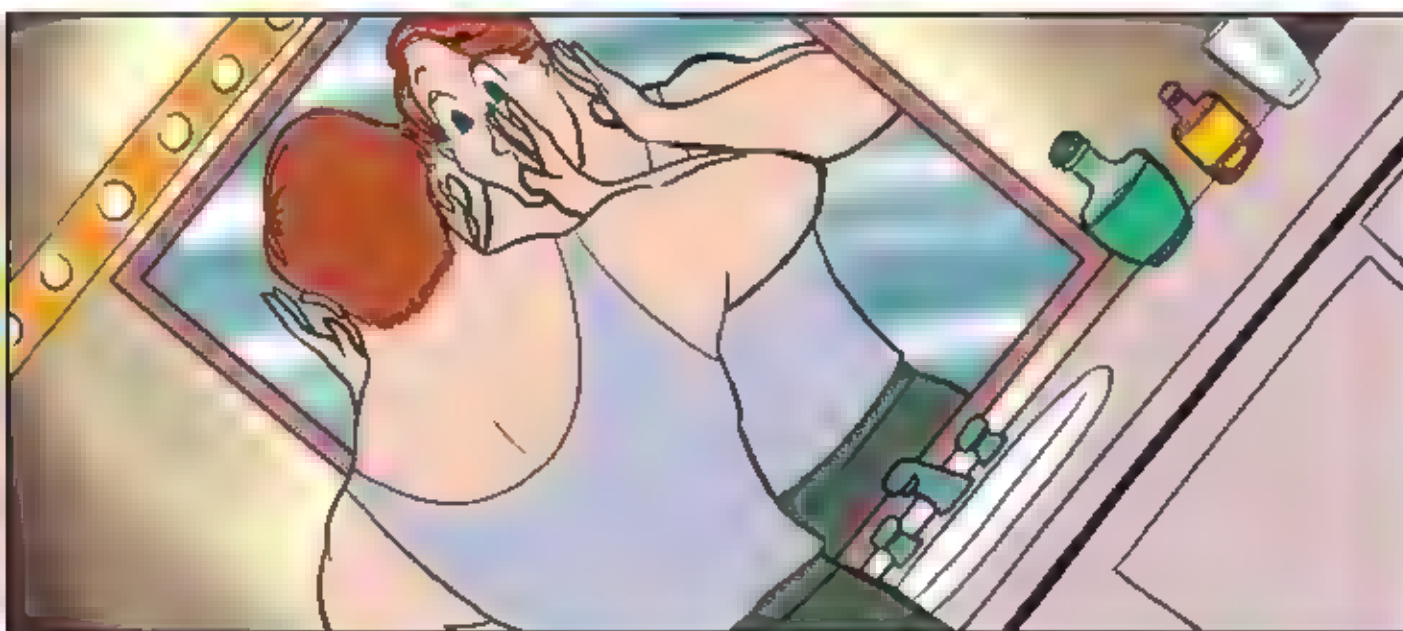


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9 CHICKWEED LANE



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HEY, YOU TWO...
...GET A ROOM.



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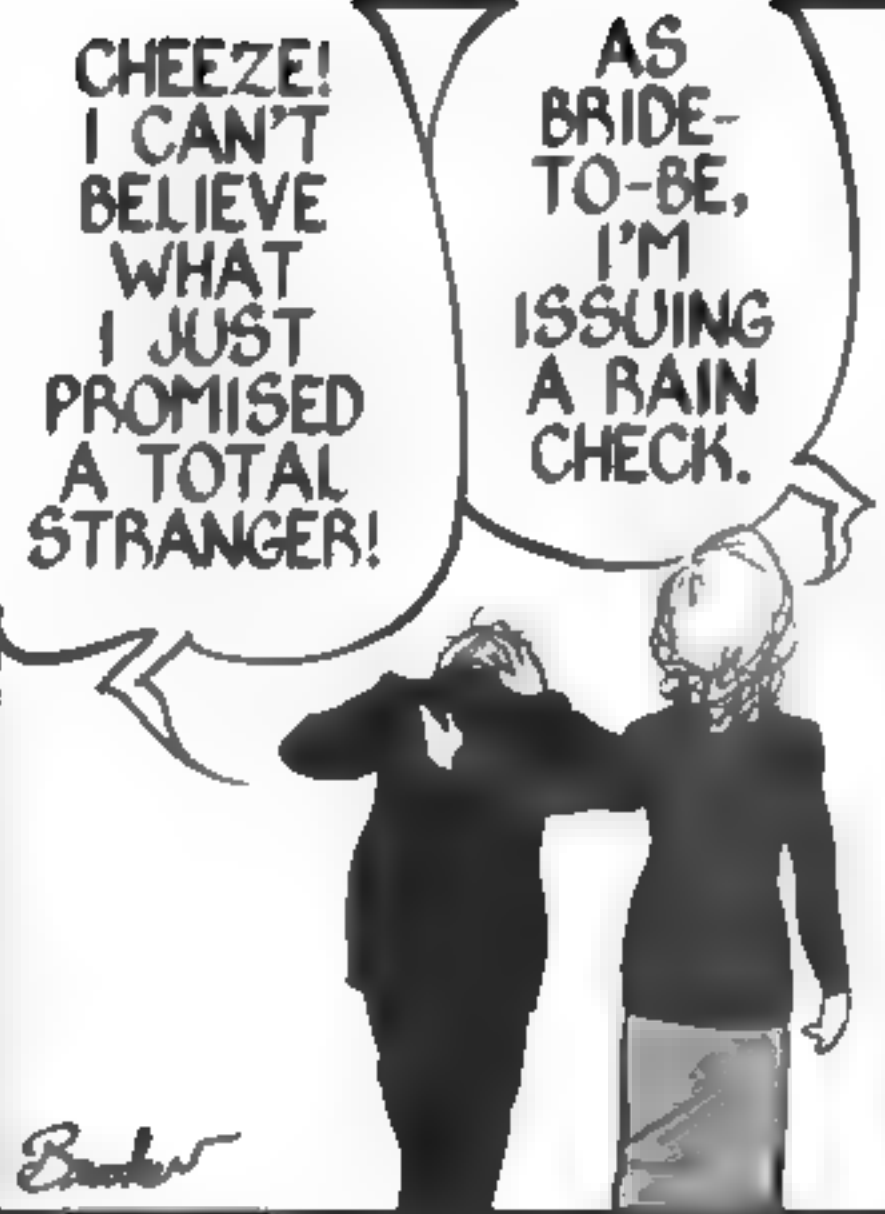
GOOD
ADVICE!
YOU BET!
RIGHT
AWAY!

FRANCIS,
HAVE YOU ANY
IDEA WHAT THAT
EXPRESSION
MEANS?



CHEEZE!
I CAN'T
BELIEVE
WHAT
I JUST
PROMISED
A TOTAL
STRANGER!

AS
BRIDE-
TO-BE,
I'M
ISSUING
A RAIN
CHECK.



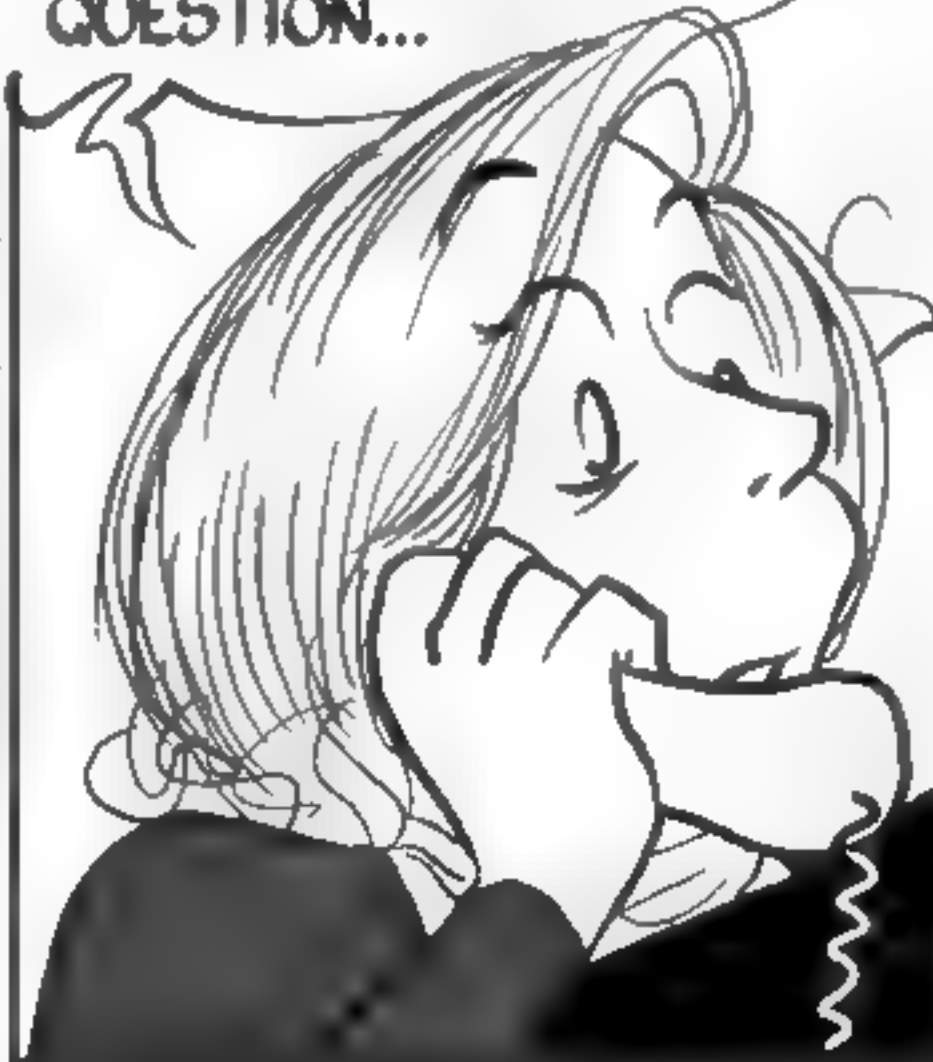
Brooke

WELL, I'M THRILLED YOU'RE
GETTING MARRIED TO
FRANCIS!
DID YOU
TELL
EDDA
YET?



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YES, I DID...AND FURTHER
TO THAT, I HAVE A
QUESTION...



Brooke

CONGRATULATIONS,
FRANCIS! YOU AND DIANE
WILL BE SO HAPPY!

ARE WE INVITED TO
THE WEDDING?

AP-11 2002 Universal Studios Inc. Dist. by UFS Inc.

WELL...ABOUT THAT...
THERE'S ONE THING...
...IT'S KIND OF
AWKWARD
TO SAY
THIS...

WOULD
YOU CATER
IT TOO?

Brooklyn



WELL, I HOPE THAT
JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE
MARRYING, YOU'RE NOT
EXPECTING A LOT OF
HUGS AND
KISSES
AND TEARS.



NO, SISTER,
I DON'T EXPECT
THAT AT ALL.

HAVE
YOU TOLD
YOUR
FAMILY?



YOU
ARE MY
ONLY
FAMILY.



WELL,
IF YOU'RE
GOING TO STOOP
TO COERCION...



CRIPES!...ALL YOU
GUYS DO IS
SUCK FACE.



THAT
WAS
VULGAR.

PATHETIC,
ANTEDILUVIAN
BOOB.



WHERE DO PEOPLE GET
THOSE EXPRESSIONS?
THEY'RE SO
CHILDISH.



GIMME
SUGAR.

HERE COMES
THE PLANE
INTO THE
HANGAR.



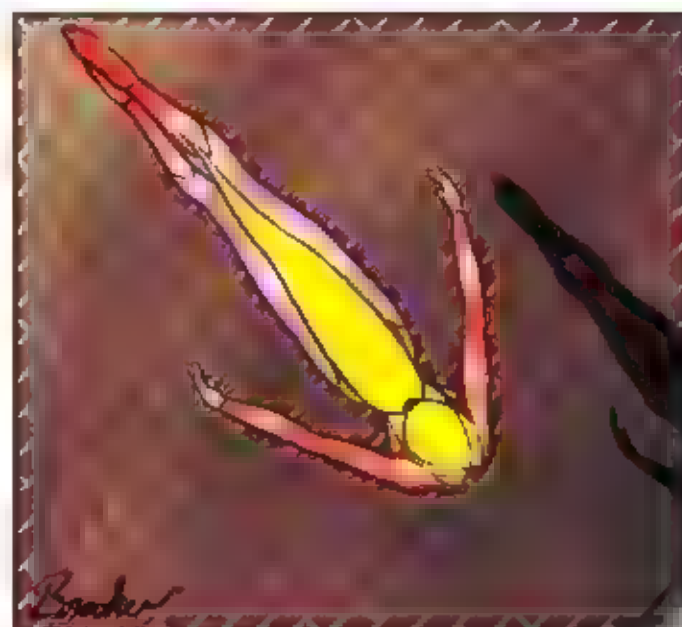
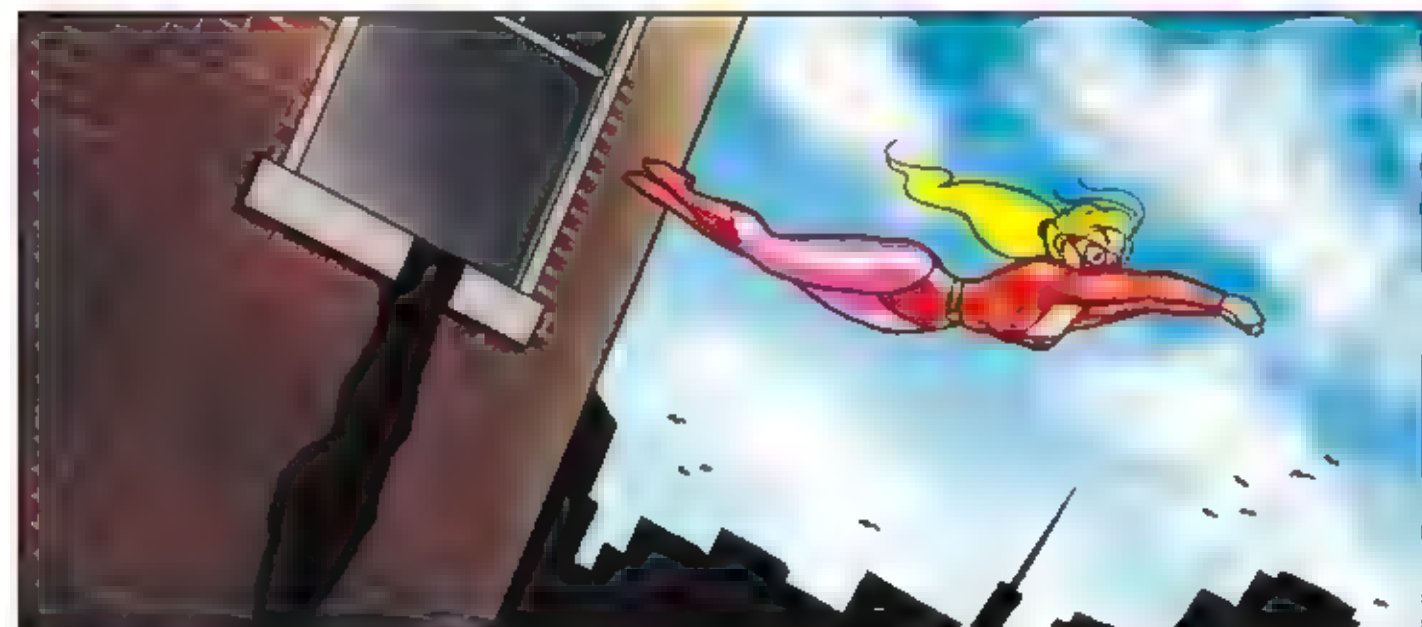


WHEN YOU
IMAGINE YOURSELF
AS SUPERLATIVE
GIRL...



...DO YOU EVER
ENVISION ME
AS A SUPER HERO
ALSO?

EDDA?



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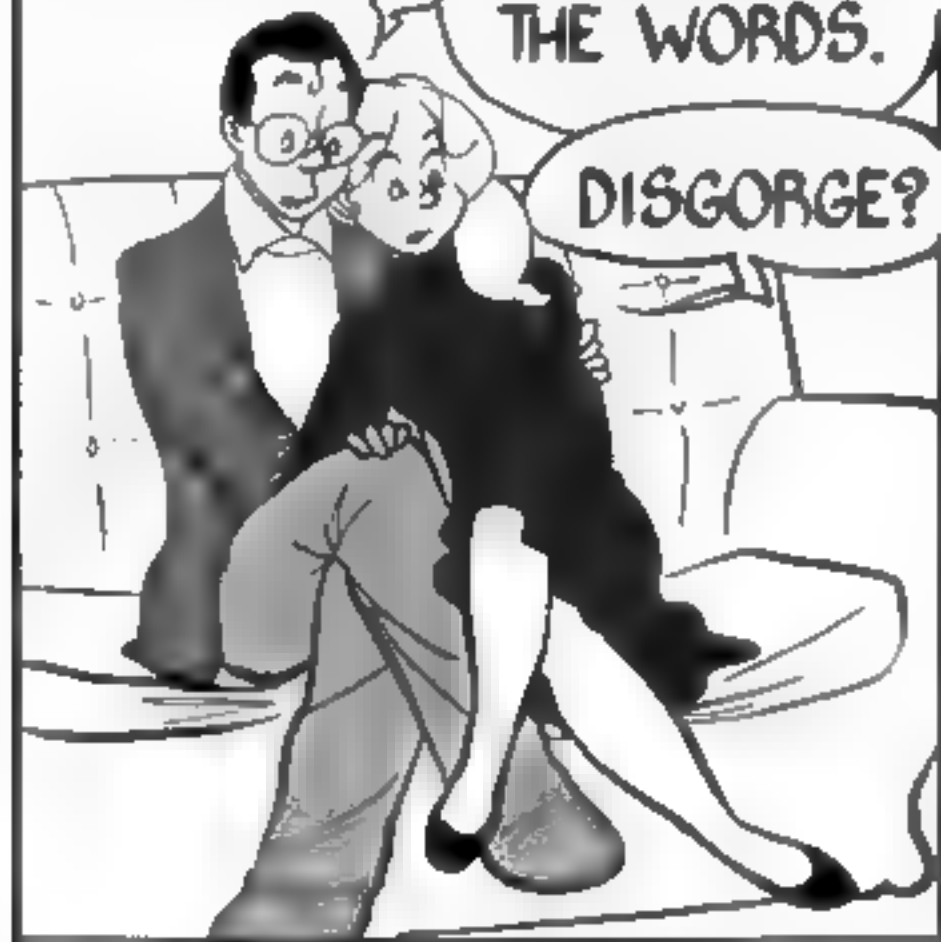


SWEETIE, WHY DO YOU LEAP
OUT THE DOOR THAT WAY EVERY
TIME WE LEAVE THE BUILDING?

NO
REASON.

SO FRANCIS PROPOSED TO
DIANE. I WONDER HOW HE
FINALLY WAS ABLE TO
DISGORGE
THE WORDS.

DISGORGE?



I MEAN, WHAT MAKES A
MAN DROP HIS GUARD AND
FIND HIMSELF SAYING WHAT
HE NEVER IMAGINED HE
COULD EVER SAY? IS IT
A MOMENT OF
COMPLETE
MADNESS?

MADNESS?



...A CHEMICAL IMBALANCE
IN THE BRAIN, SOMETHING
THAT LEAVES HIM TEMPO-
RARILY IRRESPONSIBLE AND
PRATTLING?

IRRESPONSIBLE?

PRATTLING?



WHY DO
YOU KEEP
ECHOING
MY
WORDS?

YOU MEAN, IN A
TONE THAT A
PERSON WITH
NORMAL BRAIN
CHEMISTRY
MIGHT TERM
"NASAL
MENACE"?



I TOLD EDDA THAT I WONDERED WHAT
SUDDENLY POSSESSES A MAN
LIKE FRANCIS TO OPEN HIS
MOUTH AND PROPOSE
MARRIAGE. IS IT
PSYCHOSIS, BRAIN
CHEMISTRY DYSFUNCTION...
...PLAIN LUNACY?

...AT
THAT POINT,
SHE VENTURED
IT MIGHT BE
LOVE...

...AND
GAVE ME
A REALLY
PAINFUL
NOOGIE.

SHE ALWAYS PRESENTS
A COMPELLING
LOGICAL ARGUMENT.



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I HOPE YOU WON'T MIND MY
BEING BLUNT, BUT IN THE
INTEREST OF YOUR WELL-
BEING AND THE STATE OF
YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL,
I WANT TO KNOW IF YOU
AND FRANCIS
EVER...



NO, SISTER,
WE NEVER
SINNED.

DID HE
ATTEMPT TO
COMPROMISE
YOU?



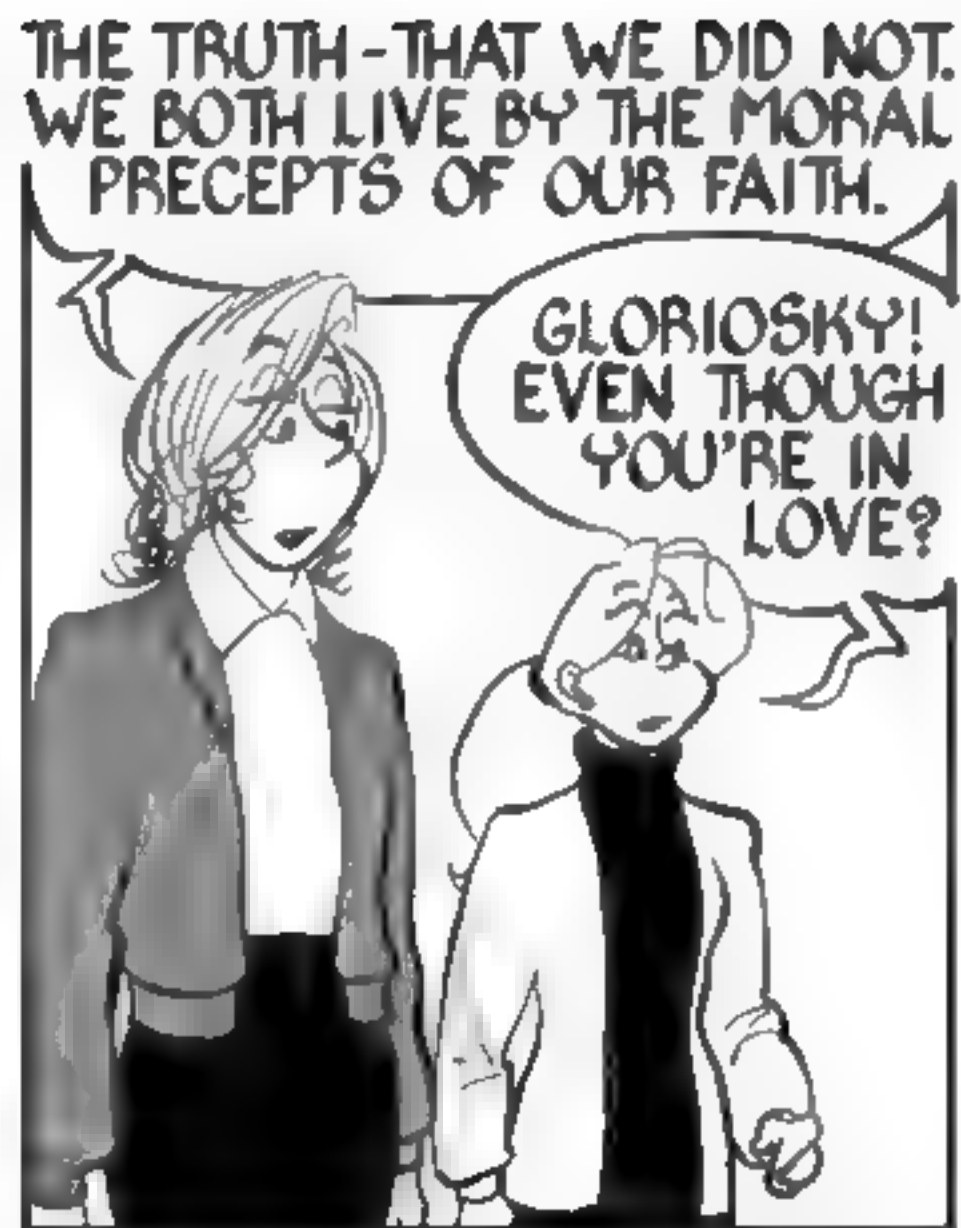
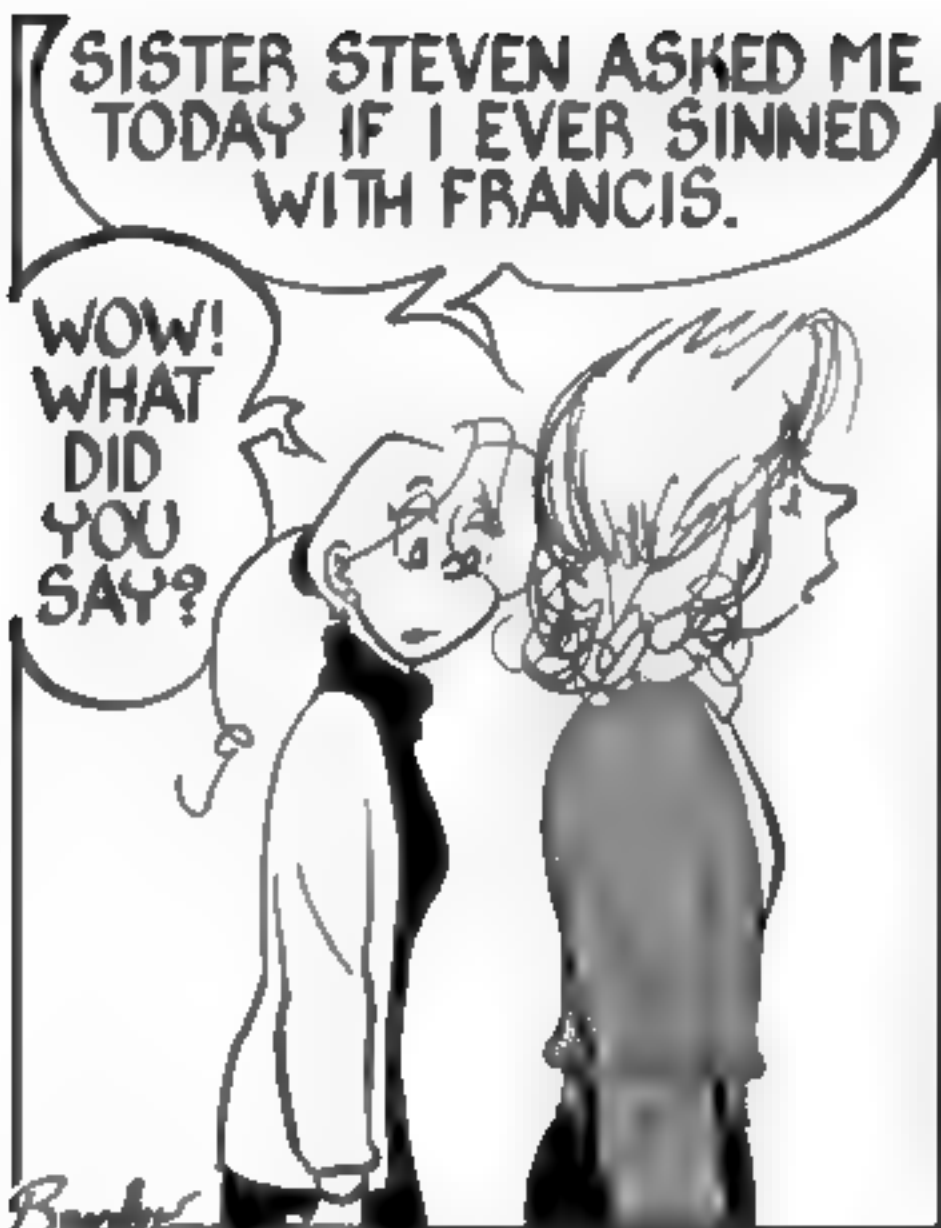
NEVER.

HAD YOU
THE DESIRE IN
YOUR HEART?

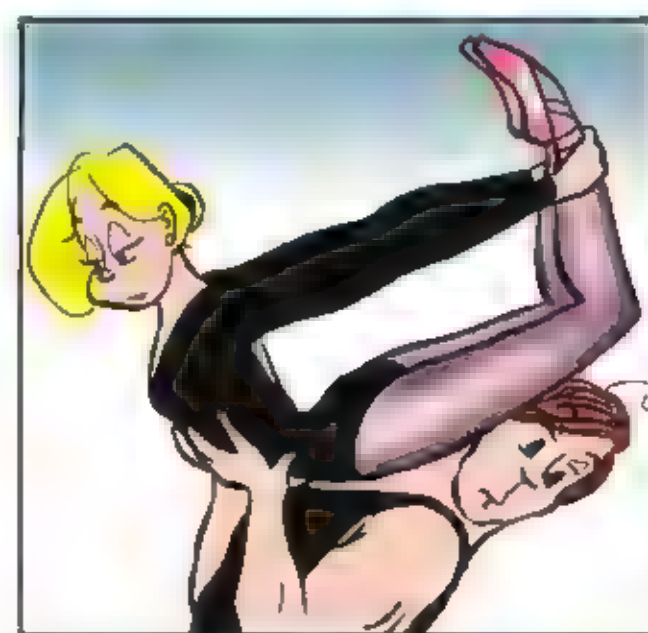
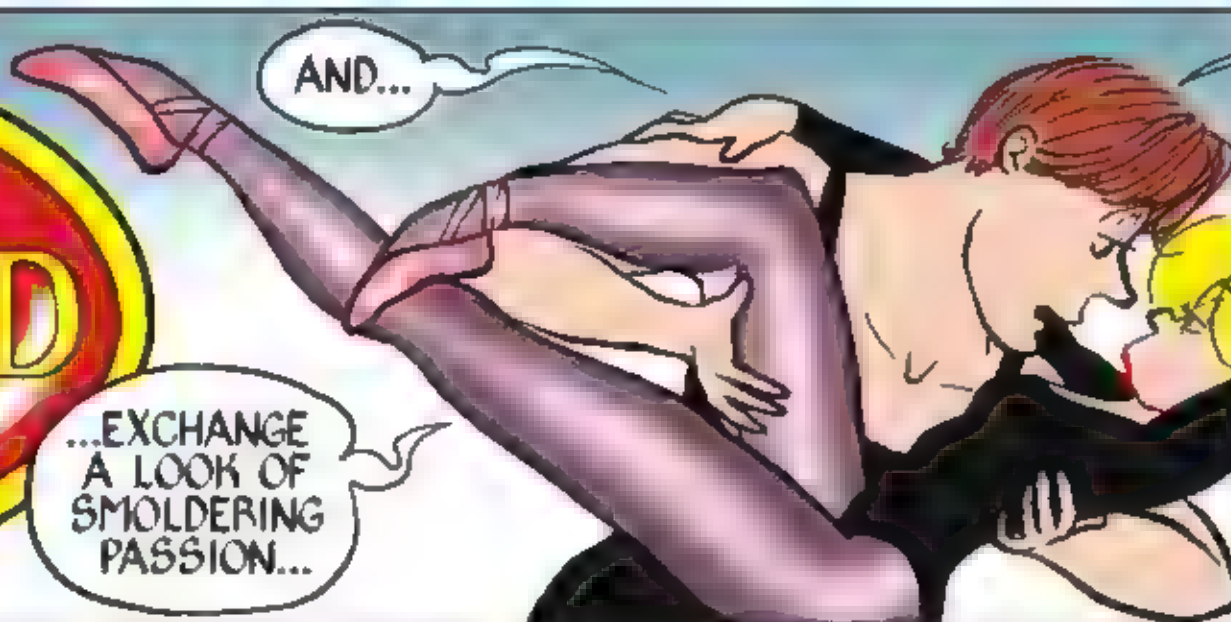


I PREFER TO BE ADDRESSED
AS "SISTER STEVEN,"
BUT I SUPPOSE, UNDER
THE CIRCUMSTANCES,
"OH, BABY," WILL HAVE
TO DO.

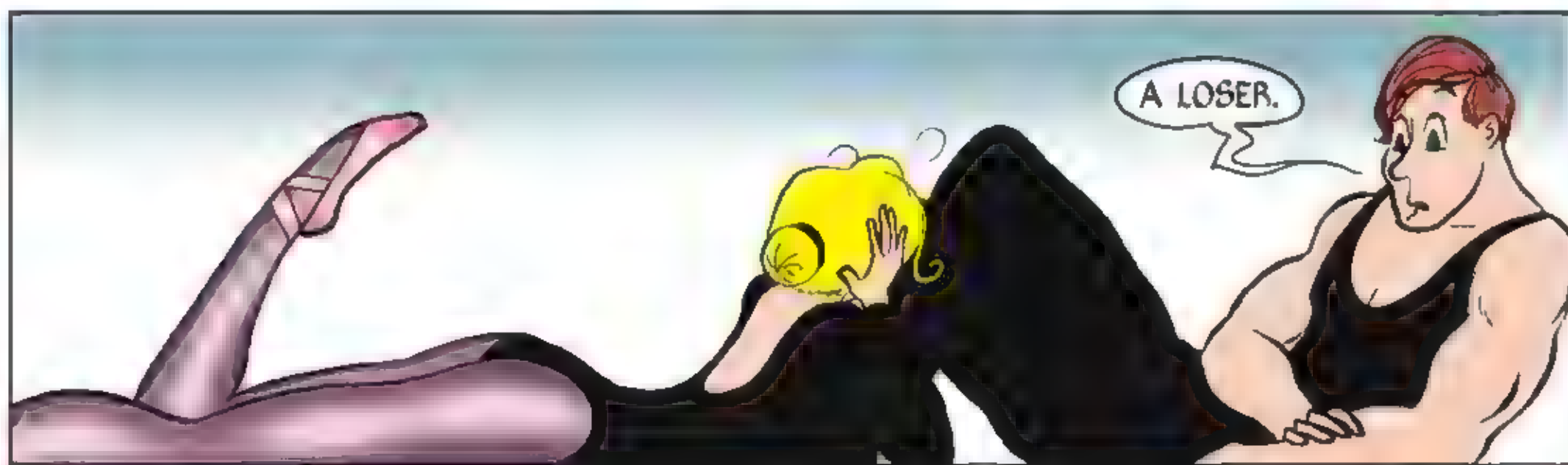
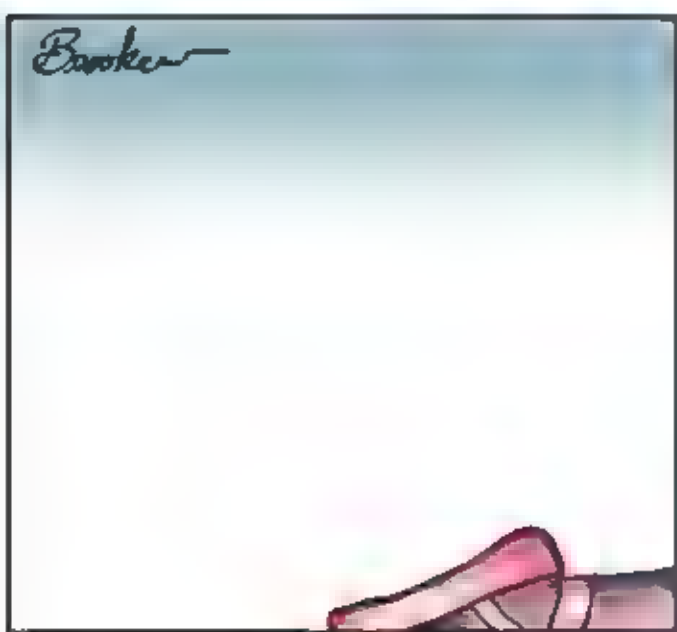




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NOW, FATHER, DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO LOOSEN UP YOUR DELIVERY. ...I WANT GRUFF, BUT WITH A WHIMSICAL UNDERTONE...MORE BARRY FITZGERALD, LESS PETER LORRE. LOOK AT THE COUPLE UNDER ONE RAISED EYEBROW AND SMILE KNOWINGLY. HOW'S YOUR IRISH BROGUE?



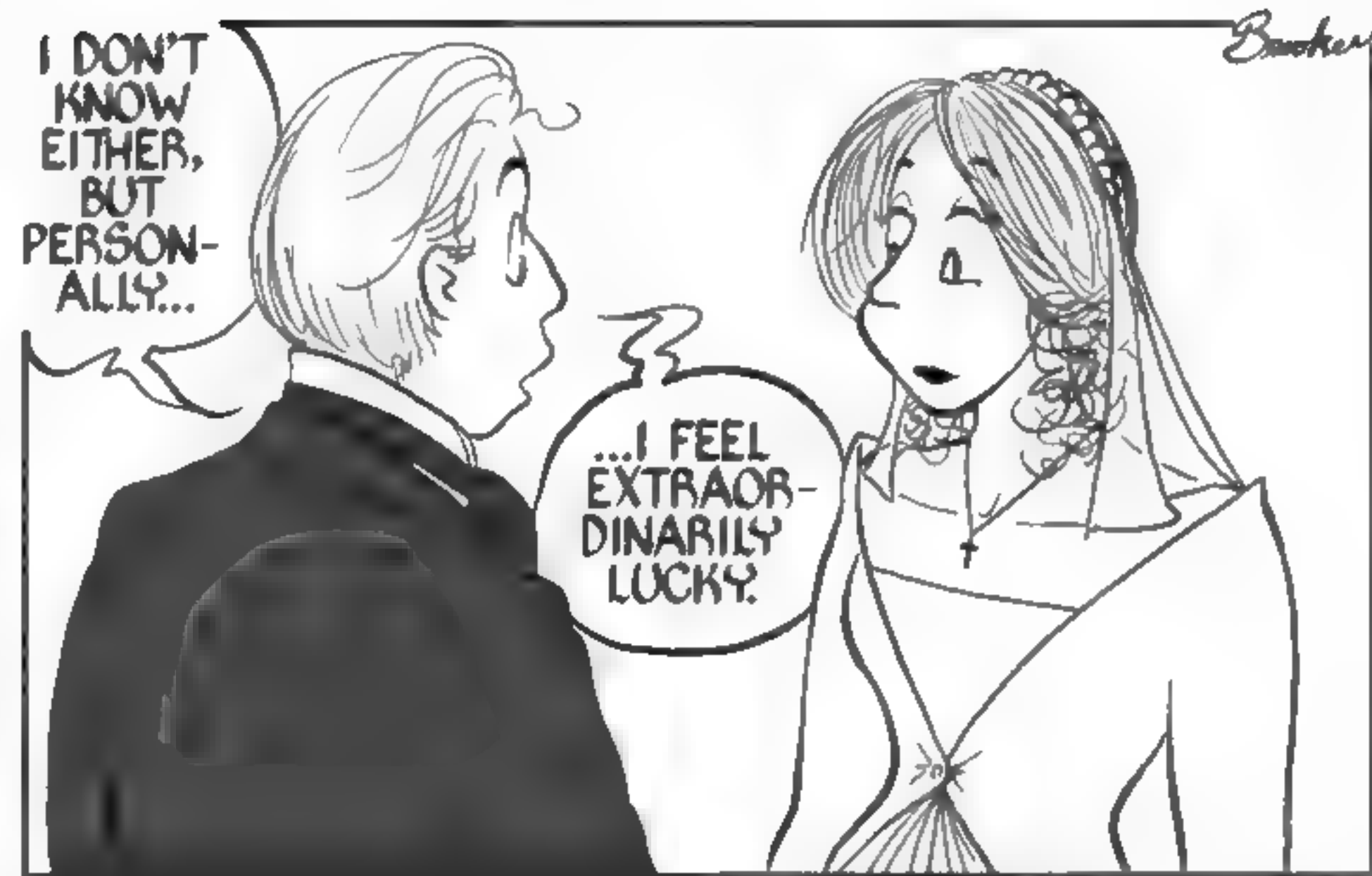


AT THE REHEARSAL I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW LONG THAT AISLE LOOKED.

IT'S LIKE BEING ON A FORCED MARCH JUST TO BECOME HUSBAND AND WIFE.



I THINK YOU'LL MANAGE JUST FINE.





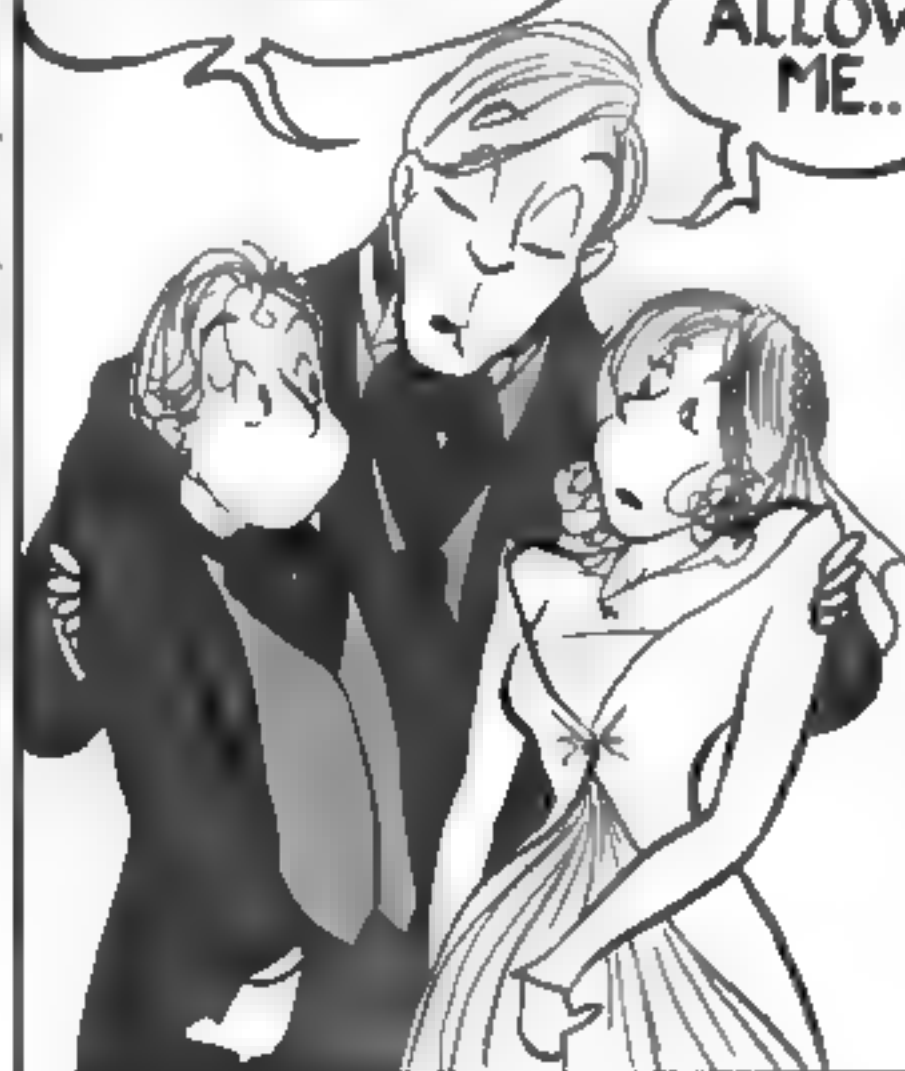
WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY
LEGS?...I CAN'T STEP
FORWARD!



I DON'T KNOW...
MINE ARE SORT OF
MALFUNCTIONING TOO.

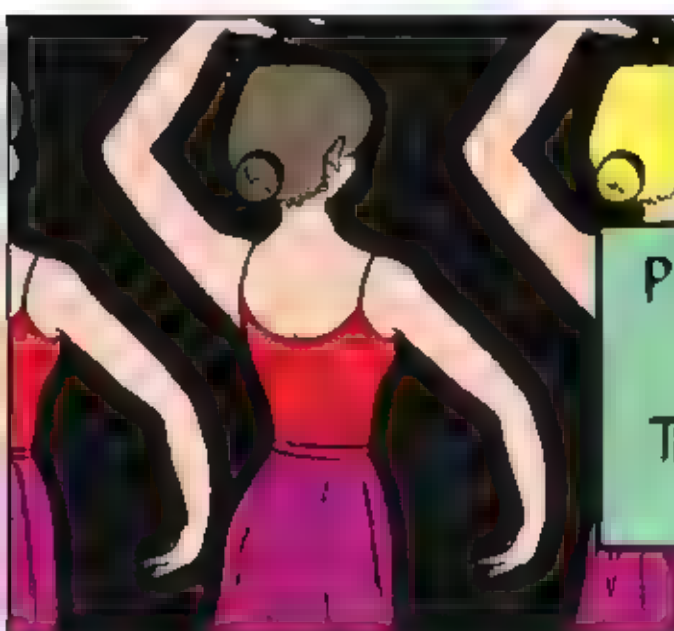
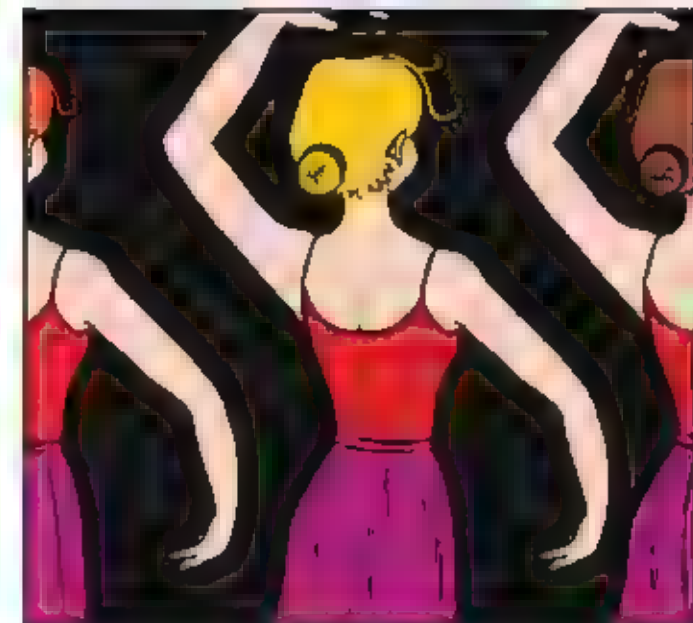
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LOST YOUR MAP
COORDINATES?

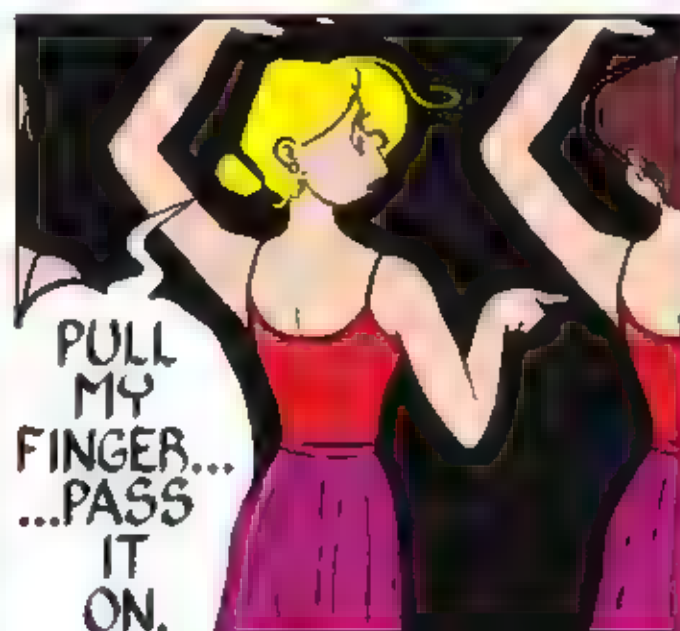
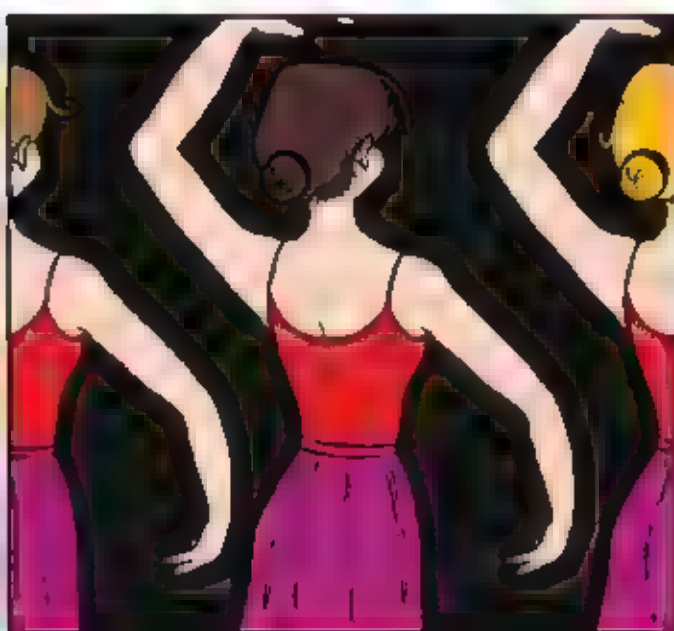
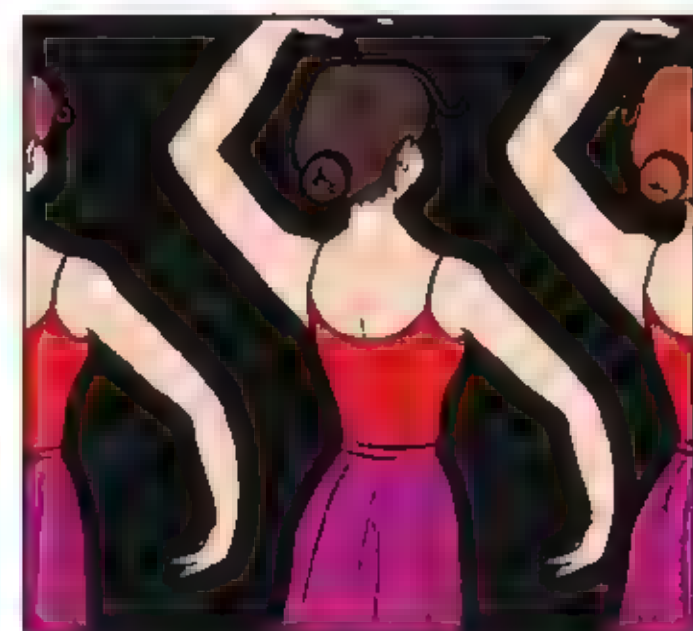
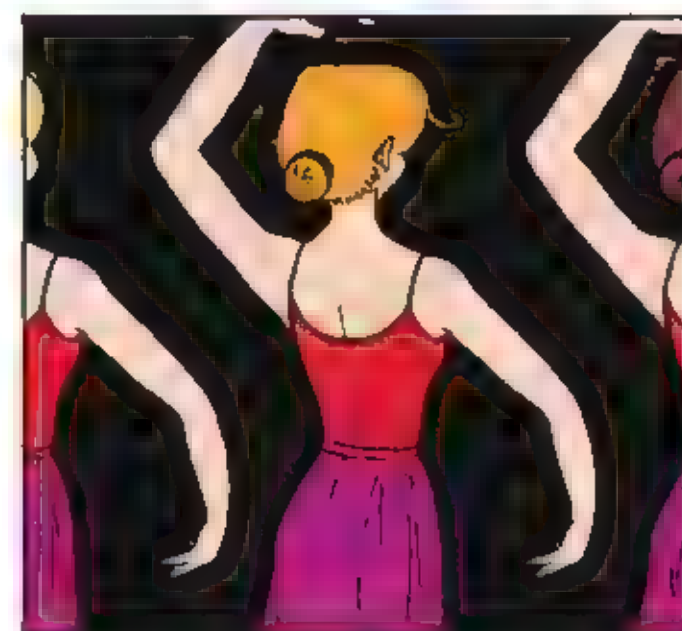


ALLOW
ME...

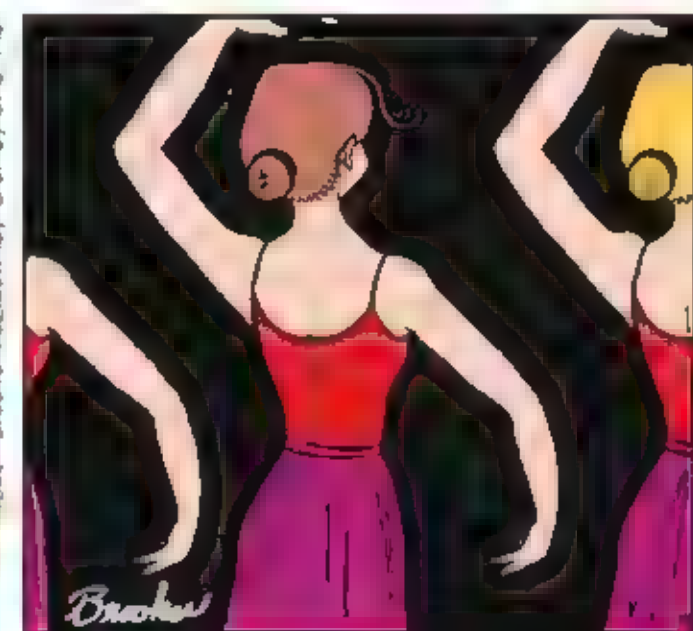
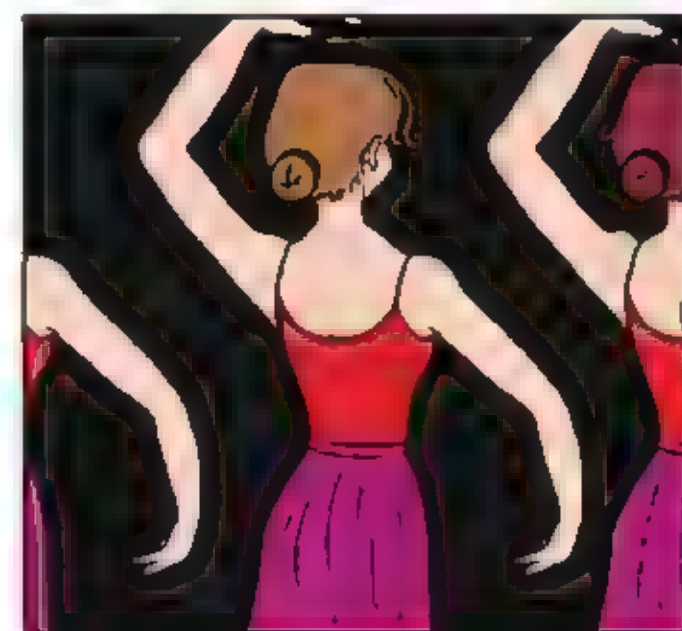




PRE-PERFORMANCE
GOOD LUCK
TRADITIONS OF
THE GREAT BALLET
COMPANIES



PULL
MY
FINGER...
...PASS
IT ON.



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Broome



FRANCIS, WILL YOU TAKE DIANE,
HERE PRESENT, FOR YOUR
LAWFUL WEDDED WIFE
ACCORDING TO THE RITE
OF OUR HOLY
MOTHER, THE
CATHOLIC
CHURCH?

I WILL.

Brooks

HE
SAID
IT!

YOU'RE
GRIPPING
MY
THIGH!

DIANE, WILL YOU TAKE
FRANCIS, HERE PRESENT,
FOR YOUR LAWFUL WEDDED
HUSBAND ACCORDING TO
THE RITE OF
OUR HOLY
MOTHER,
THE
CATHOLIC
CHURCH?



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SHE COULDN'T SLEEP, AND SPENT
THE WHOLE NIGHT WATCHING
LAUREN BACALL AND HUMPHREY
BOGART
FILMS.

MY GLASSES
JUST STEAMED
UP.



Brooke

FRANCIS,
YOU MAY NOW
KISS YOUR BRIDE.



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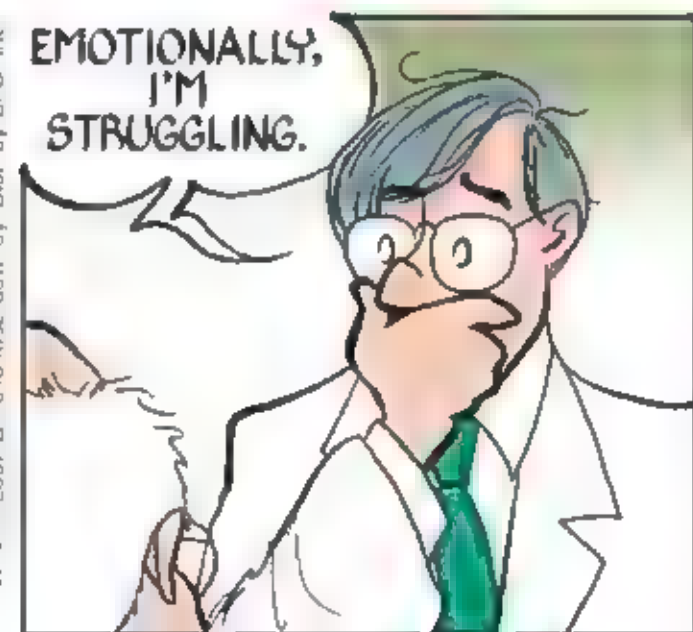
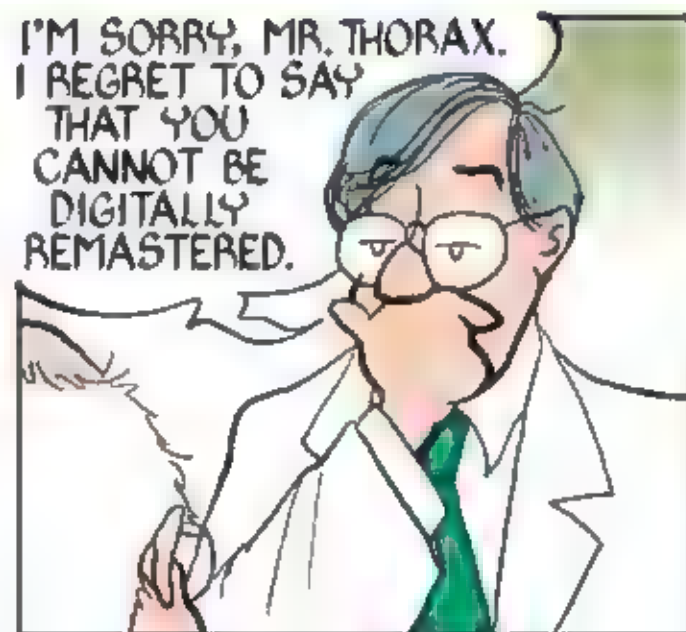
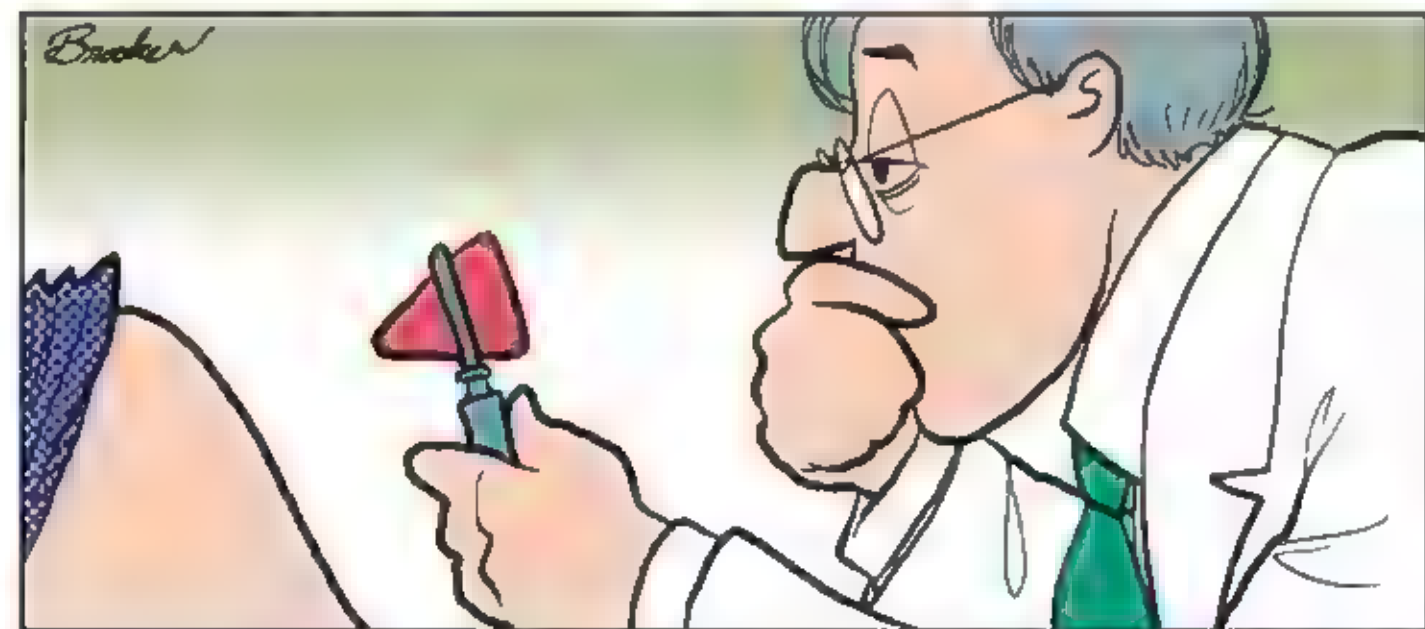
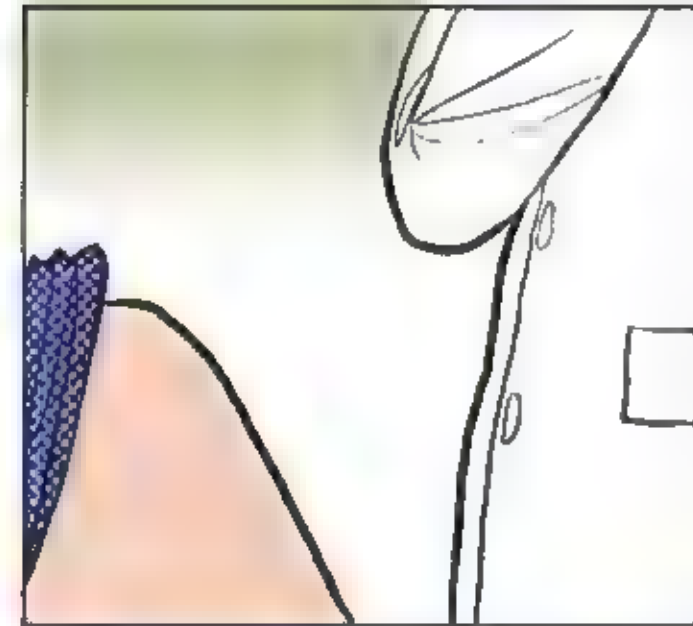
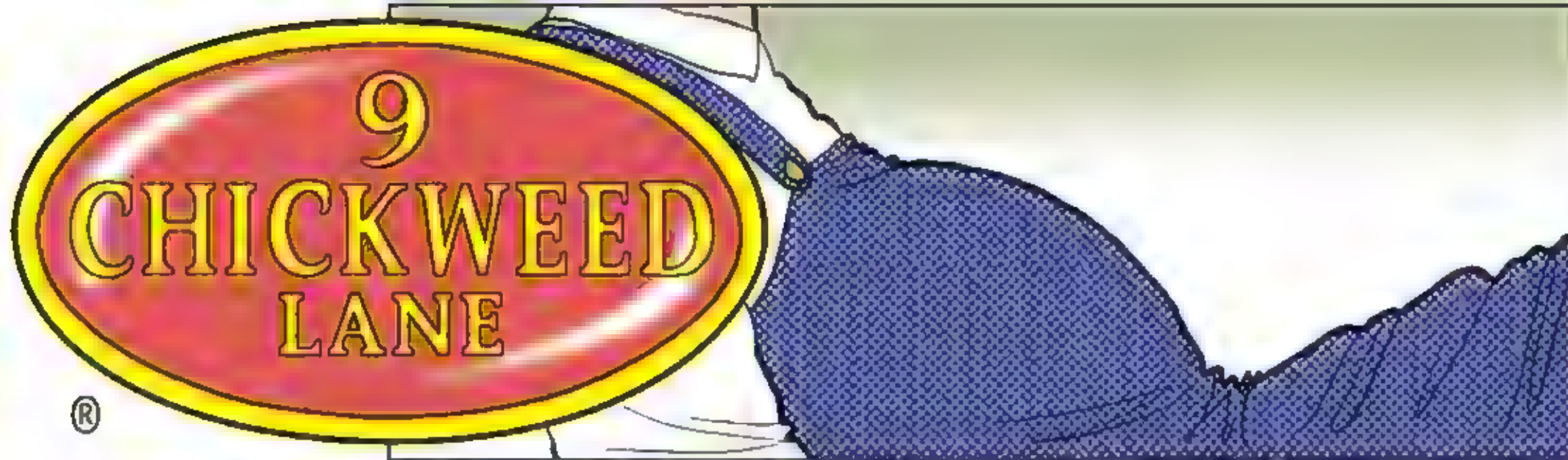






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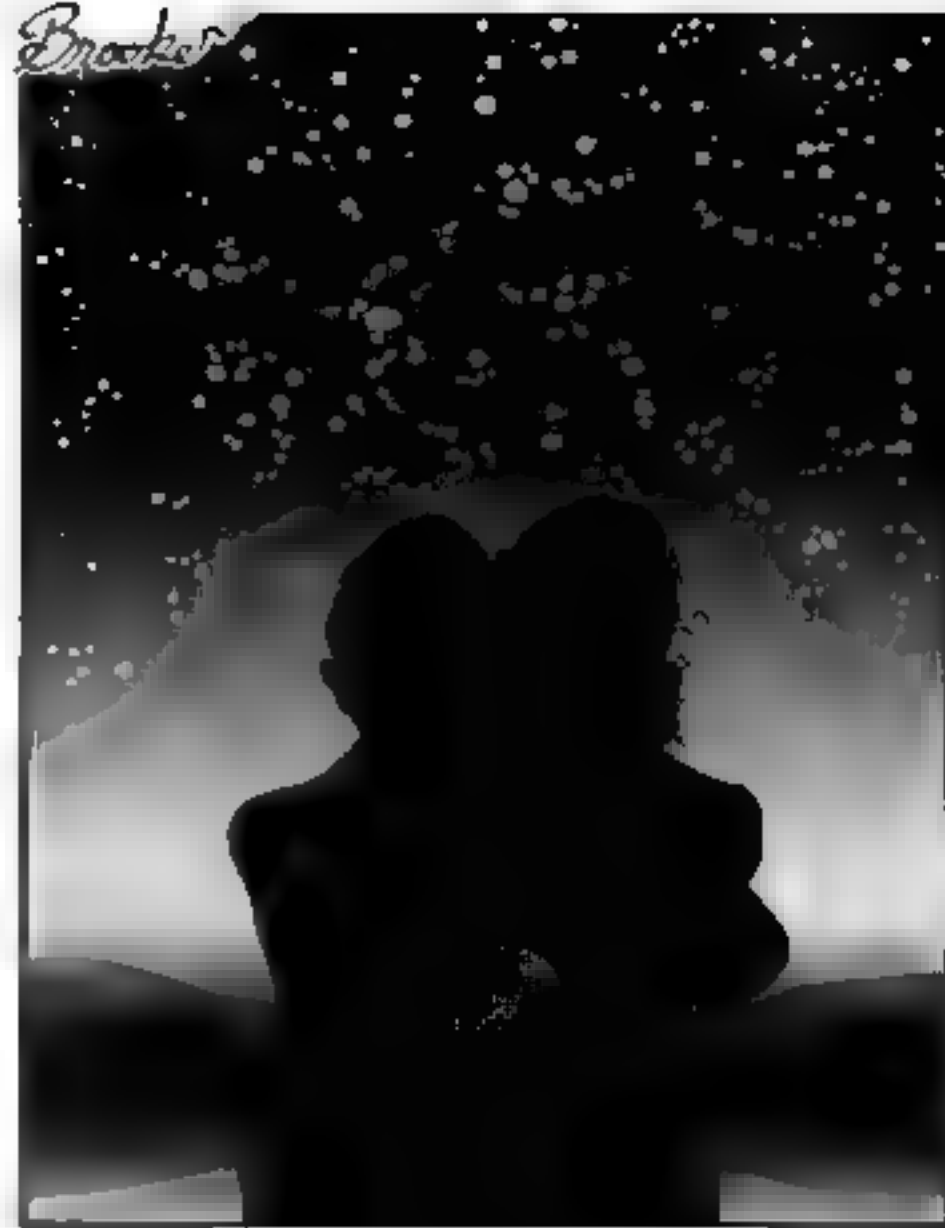
I DON'T KNOW IF
THIS AUGURS WELL
FOR THE HONEYMOON.
YOU JUST
MISSED
OUR
EXIT.



ACTUALLY,
I WAS HOPING
YOU'D INDULGE
ME IN ONE
LITTLE
EXTRA
THING.

Brooke





THIS ISN'T
QUITE HOW
I'D IMAGINED
THIS...UM...
PARTICULAR
MOMENT.

YOU MEAN,
THE AWK-
WARDNESS,
THE STILTED
CONVER-
SATION?

WHAT
HAD YOU
IMAGINED
IT WOULD
BE LIKE?

WELL...
...FOR
INSTANCE...
...THIS.

AH.

...OR
THIS.

Mmm.

PERHAPS
EVEN
THIS.

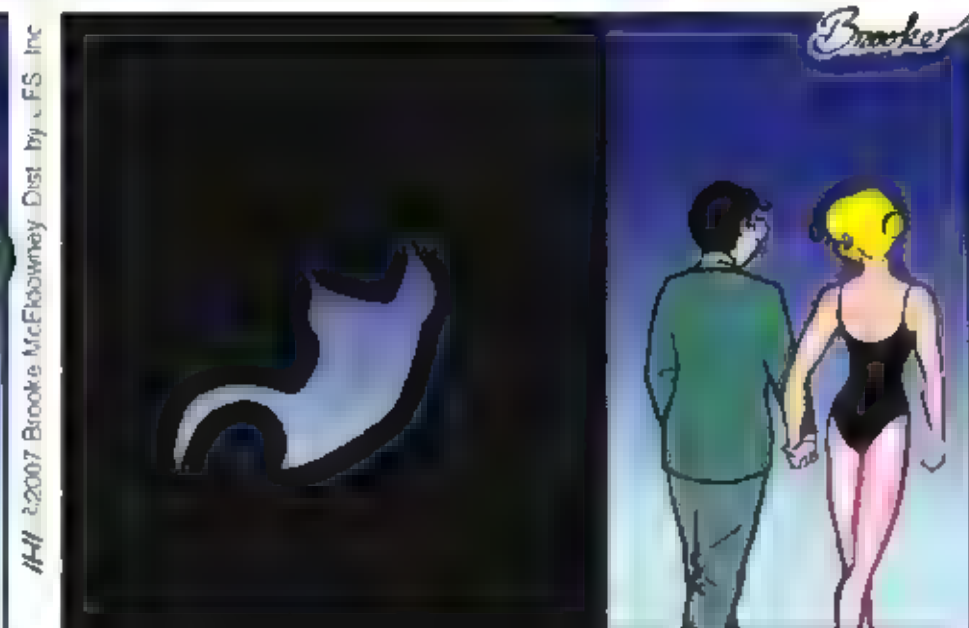
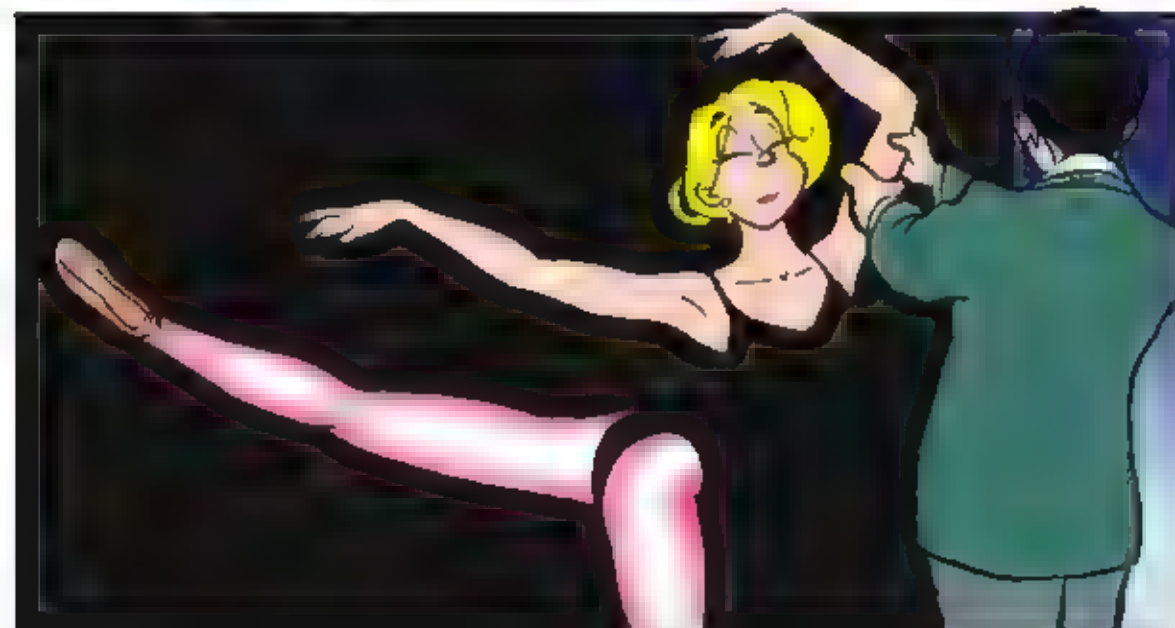
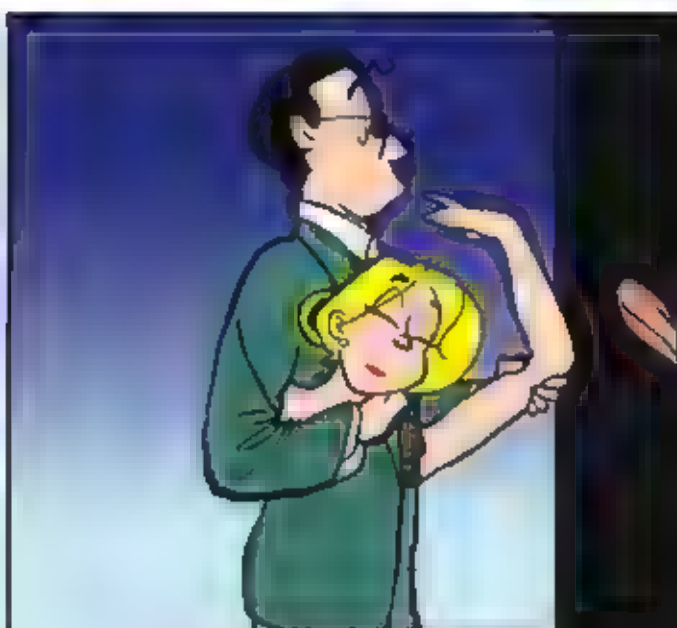
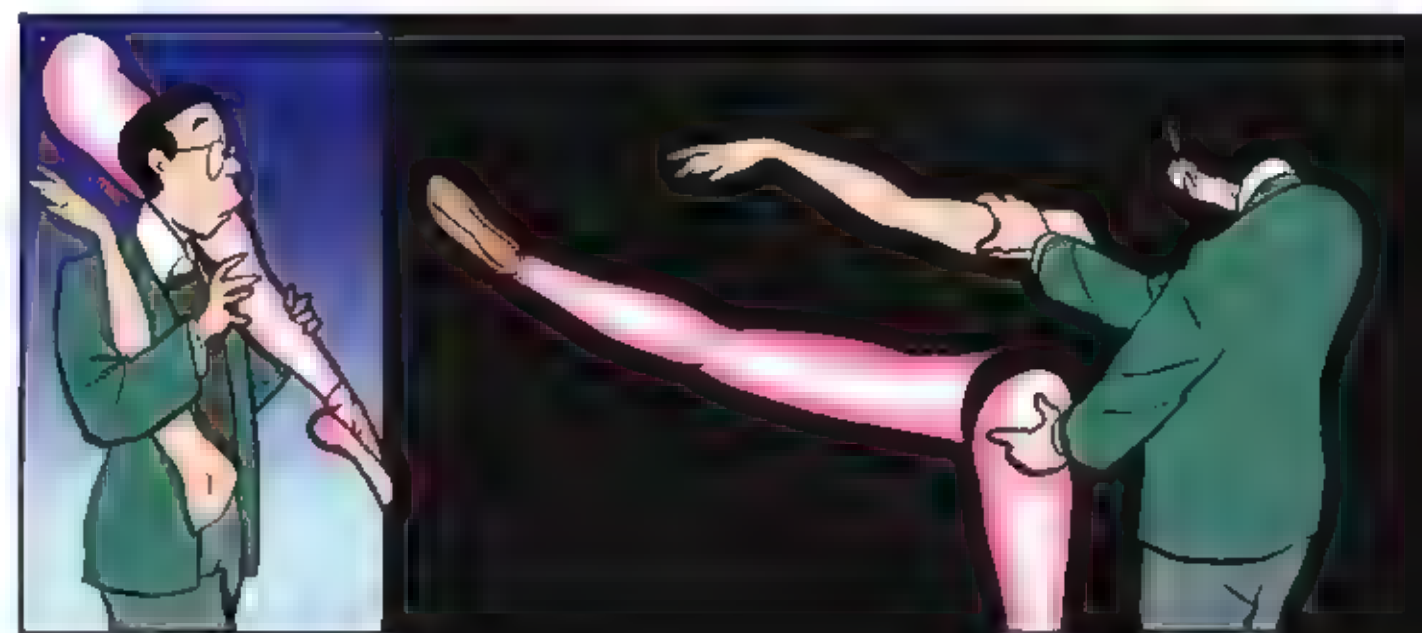
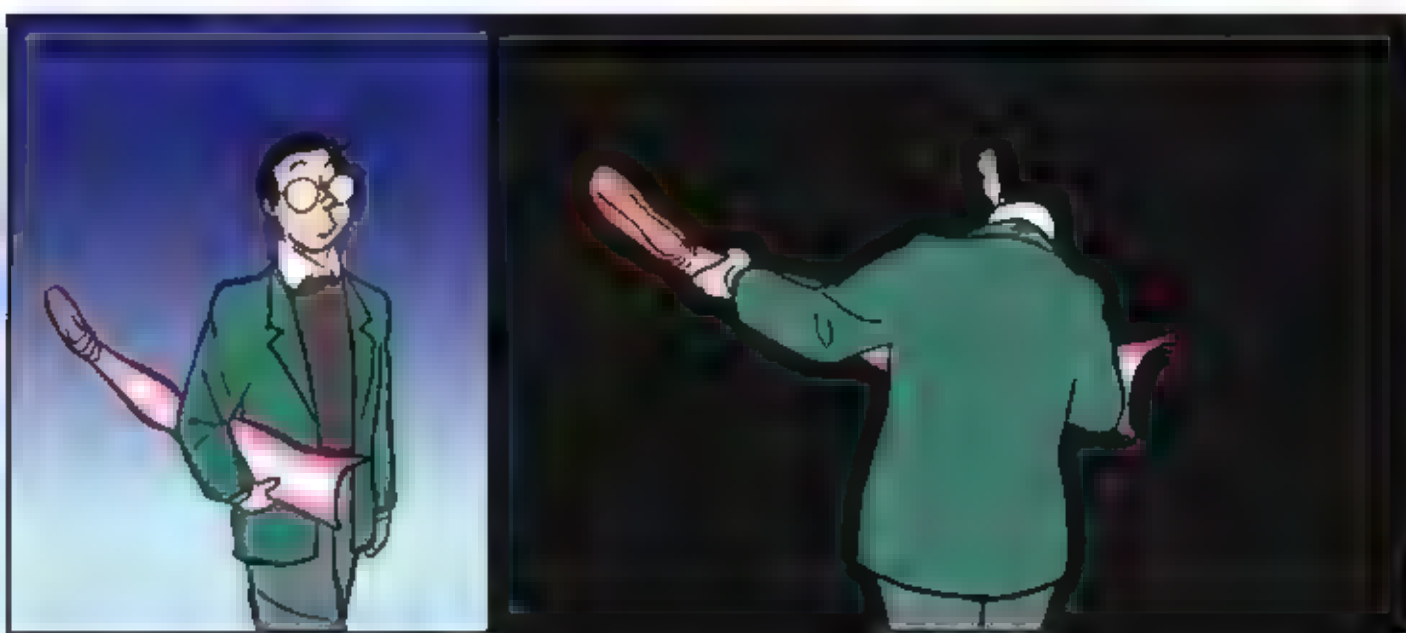
OH.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

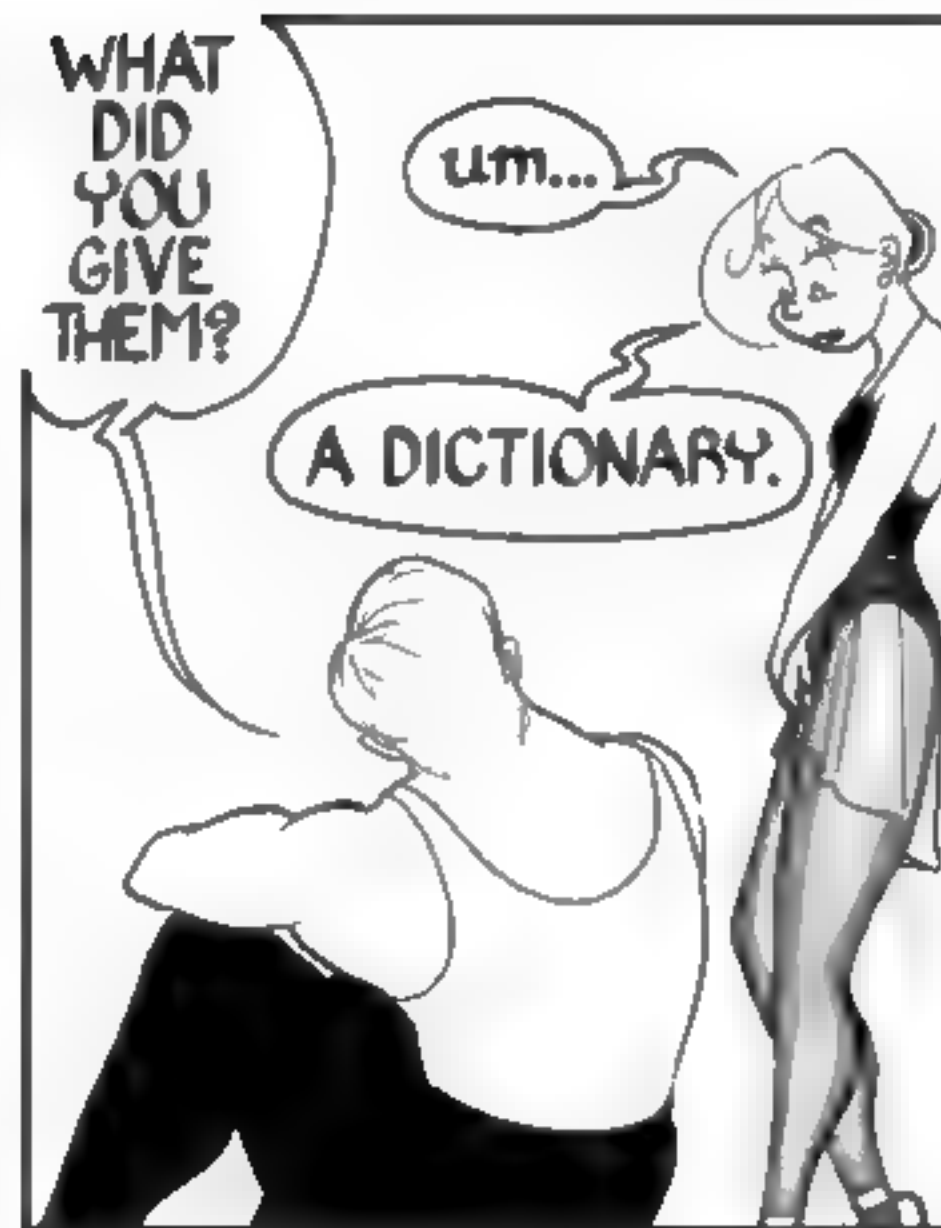
"FOR
INSTANCE"
AND "OR"
WERE NICE, BUT
I PARTICULARLY
ENJOYED
"PERHAPS
EVEN."

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Brooke

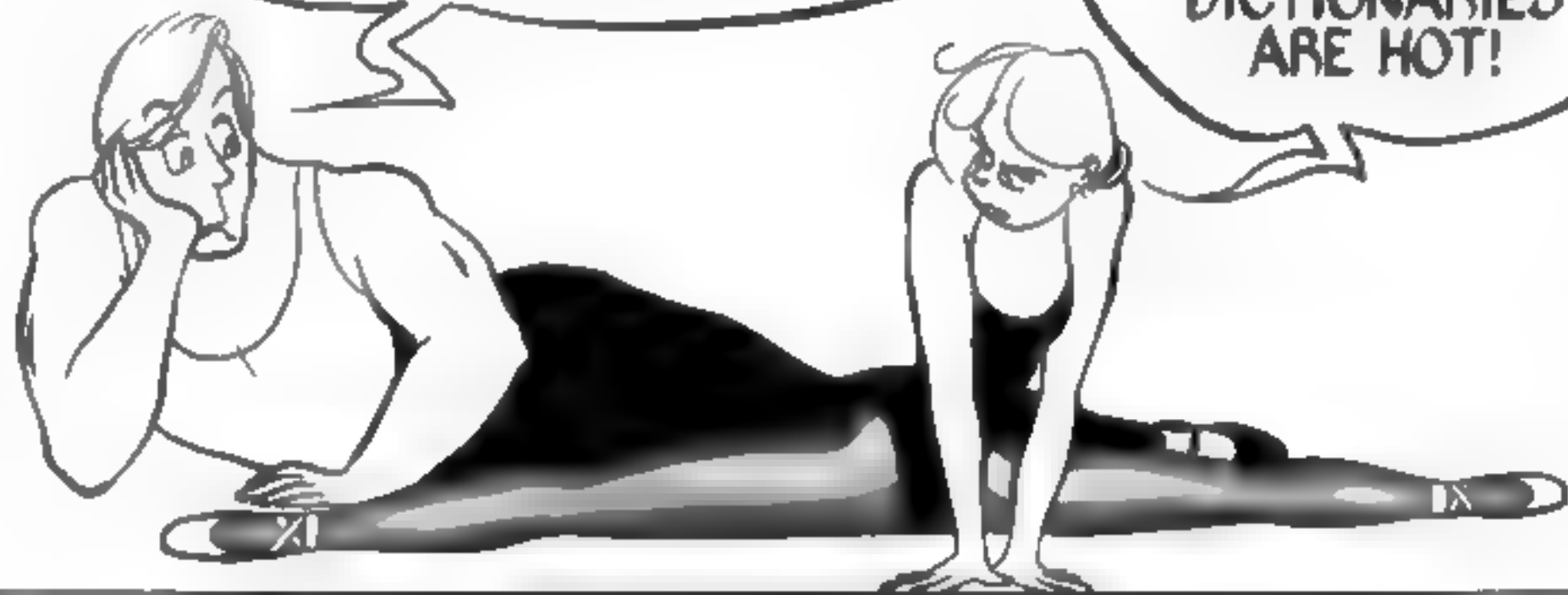


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YOU GAVE THE SWEETEST,
MOST ROMANTIC COUPLE OF
STRAIGHT PEOPLE ON EARTH
AN UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY
AS A WEDDING GIFT?

DON'T
KNOCK IT.
YOU SHOULD
SEE SOME OF
THE WORDS IN
THAT THING.
...UNABRIDGED
DICTIONARIES
ARE HOT!



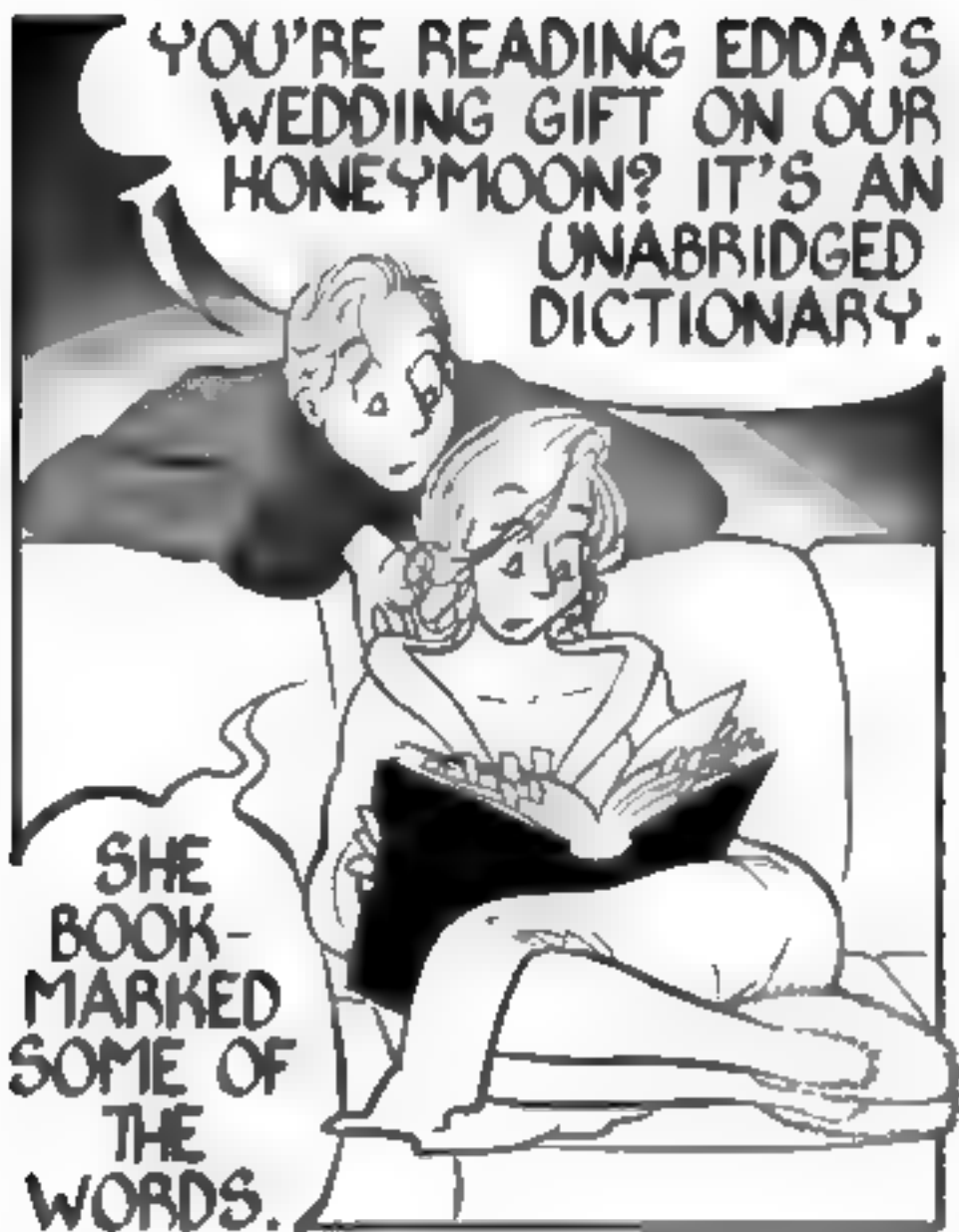
Brooke



OH PLEASE, DON'T TELL ME
YOU MARKED THE PAGES
FOR THEM.

ALL
RIGHT,
I WON'T
TELL
YOU.





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SO, YOU REALLY FOOTED
THE BILL FOR DIANE'S AND
FRANCIS' HONEYMOON?

I'LL DO
THE SAME WHEN
YOU AND AMOS
MARRY.

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WHY ARE YOU SUCH A
BROKEN RECORD?! I KEEP
TELLING YOU,
WE'RE NOT
GETTING
MARRIED!

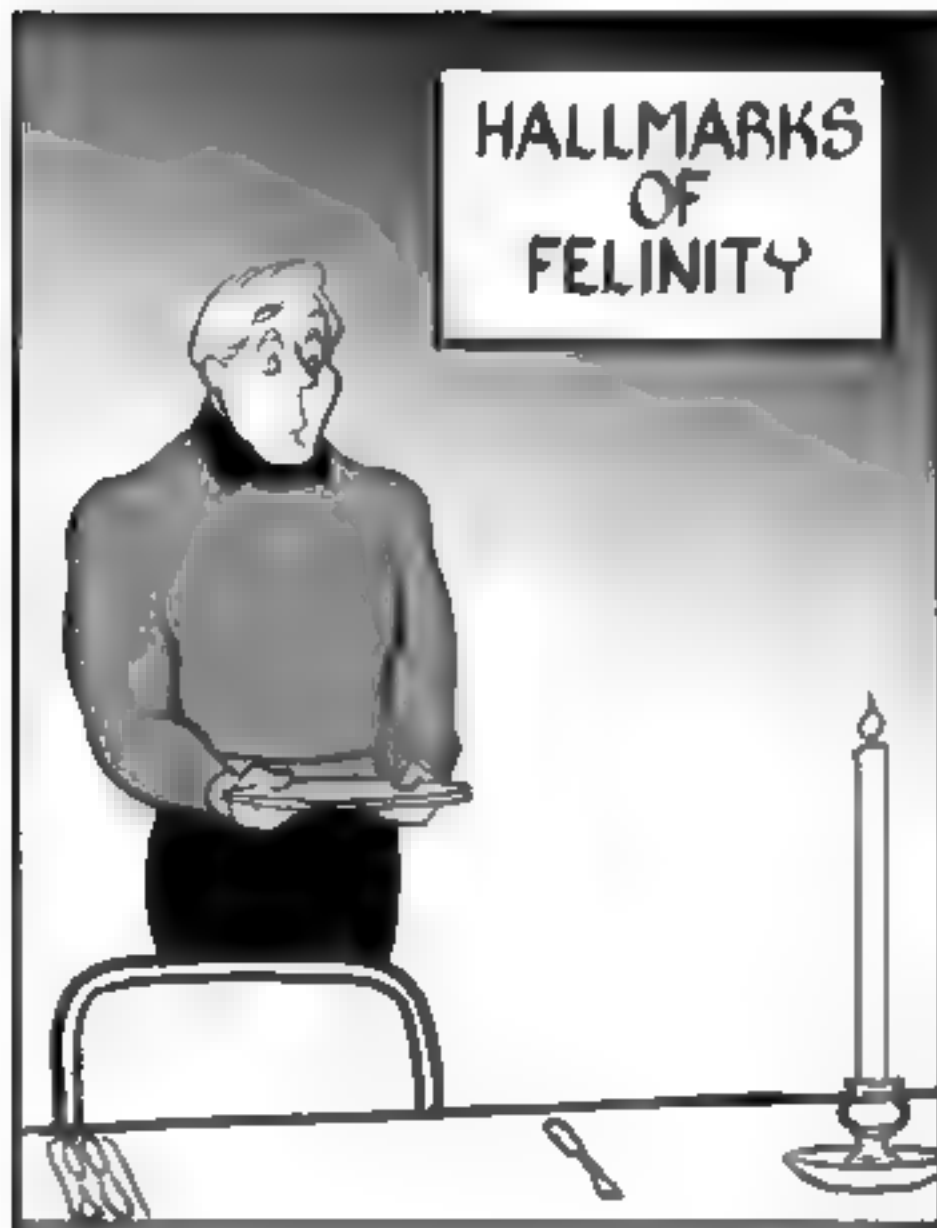


SO...UM...
..WHERE ARE YOU
SENDING US?





HALLMARKS
OF
FELINITY

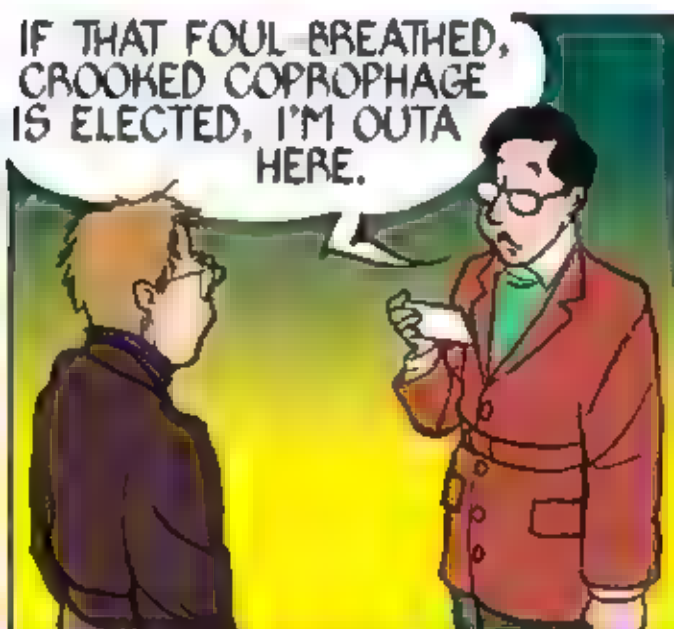
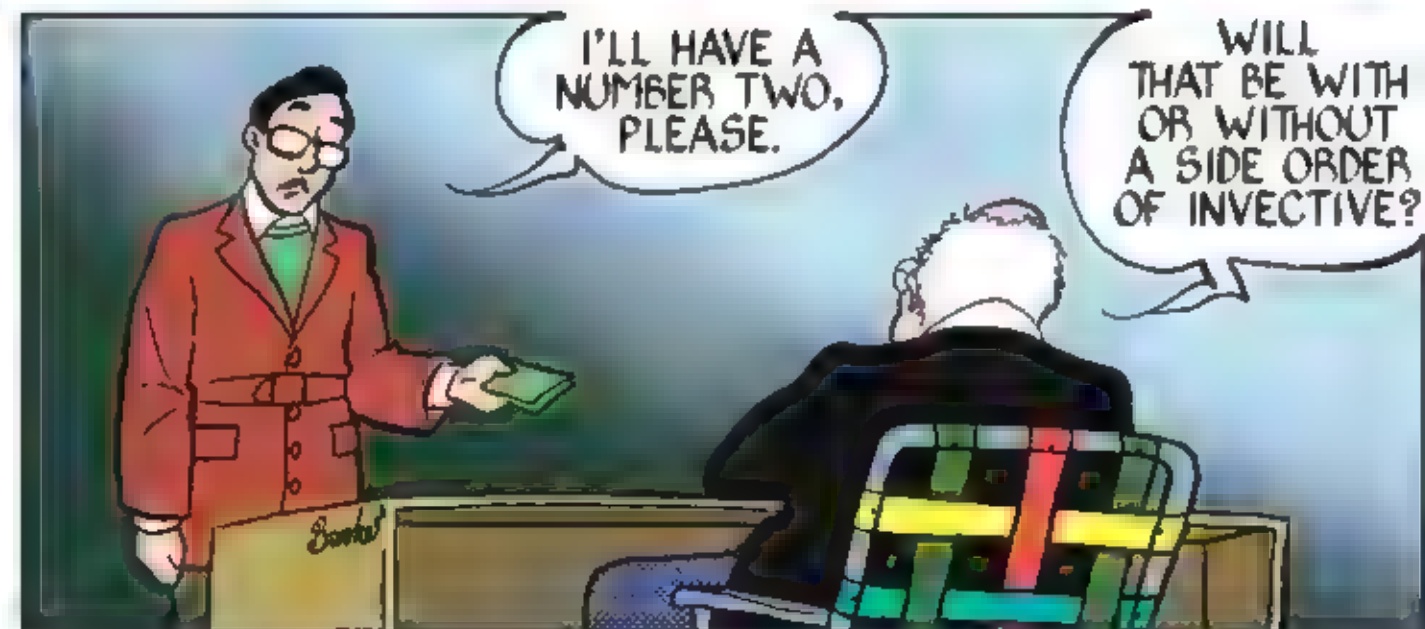
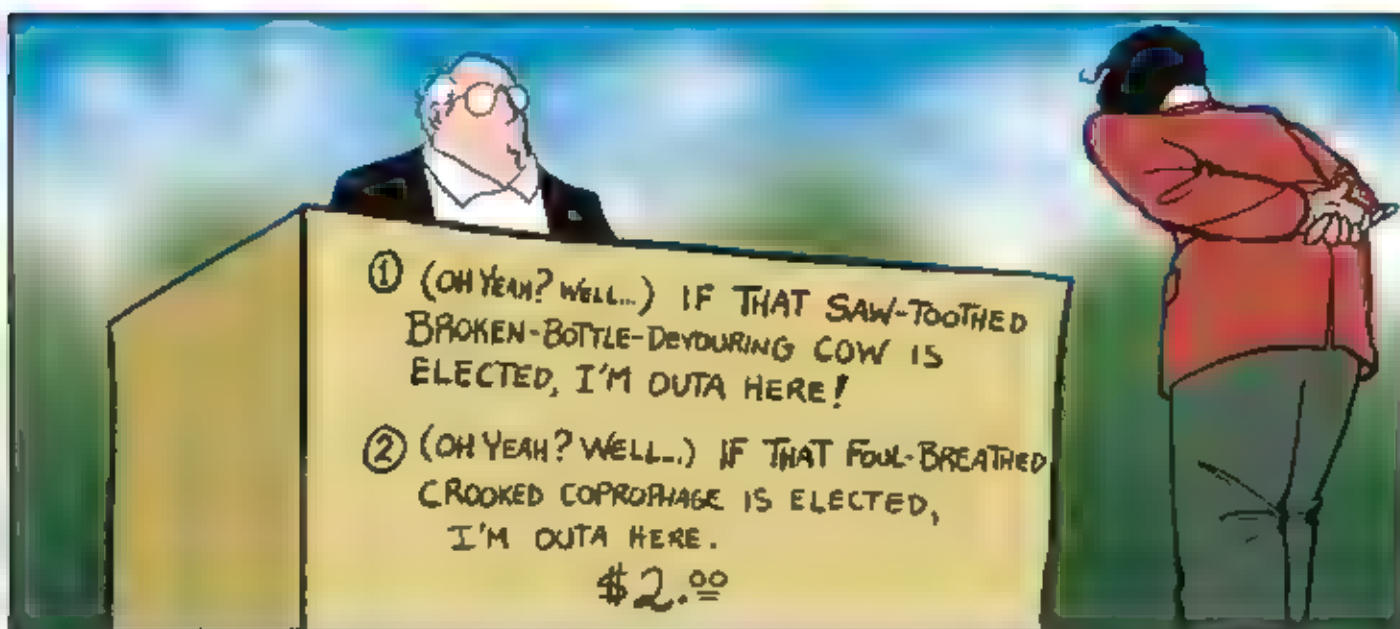
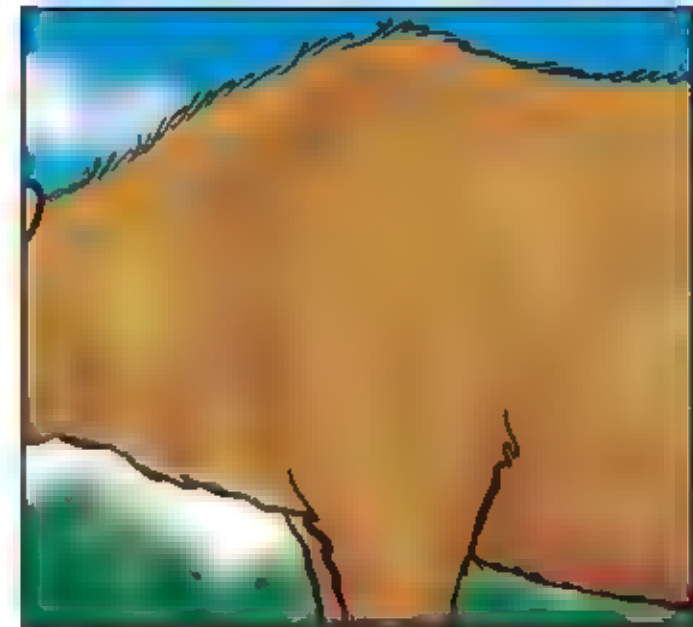


A PERSONAL
INTEREST
IN FINE
DINING



11-17 ©2007 Brooke McElowney Dist by P&H

Brooke



GOOD WORK IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED.
THAT LEAVES US WITH LITTLE ELSE
TO CELEBRATE THAN THE BUNGLED
AND CRIMINAL.

NOW THAT'S
JUST
ABSURD!

NOBODY
WOULD
ENDORSE...

APOTHEGM FOR
THE DAY 25¢

THE
LEANING
TOWER
OF
PISA.

Booker

YOU GAVE ME A DOLLAR.
DON'T YOU WANT YOUR
CHANGE?

IT'LL
DEPRECIATE.

APOTHEGM FOR
THE DAY 25¢









WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS NOW?

WELL, FIRST WE'RE GOING TO LOOK FOR A NEW APARTMENT.



HOW ABOUT KIDS?

OH, THAT'S WAY DOWN THE ROAD YET.



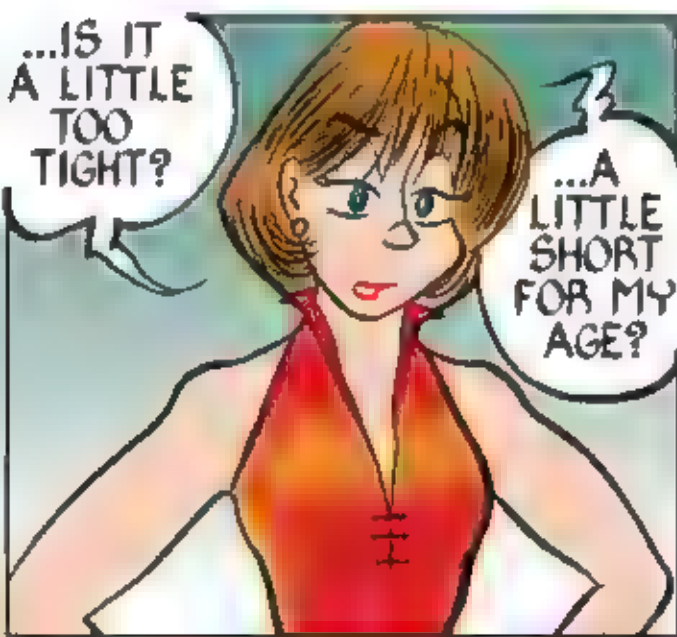
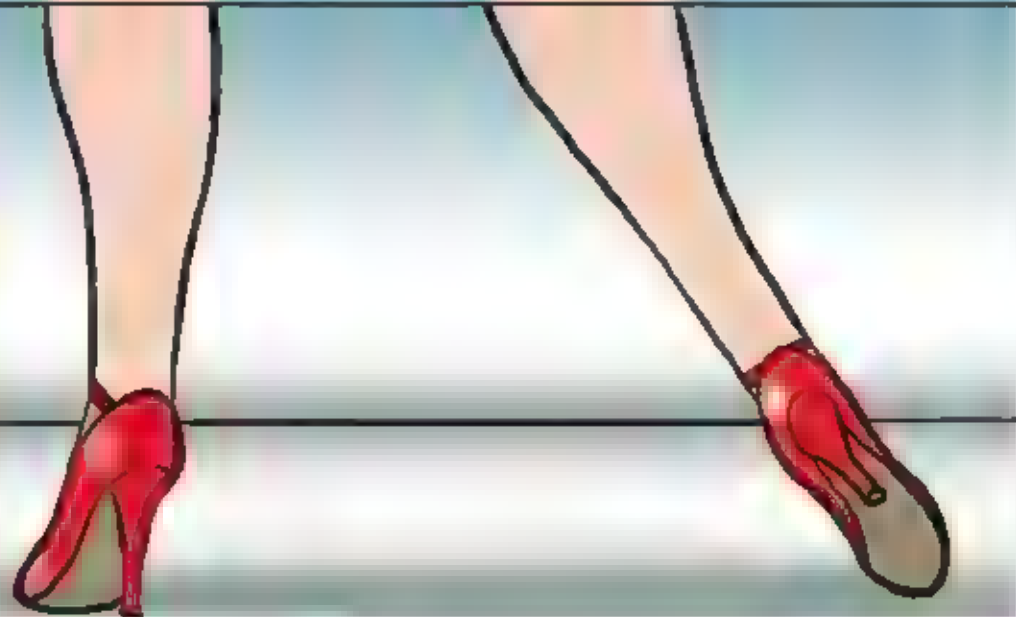
WE'RE JUST COMING DOWN OFF A THREE WEEK HONEYMOON. THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME TO PLAN FOR KIDS LATER.



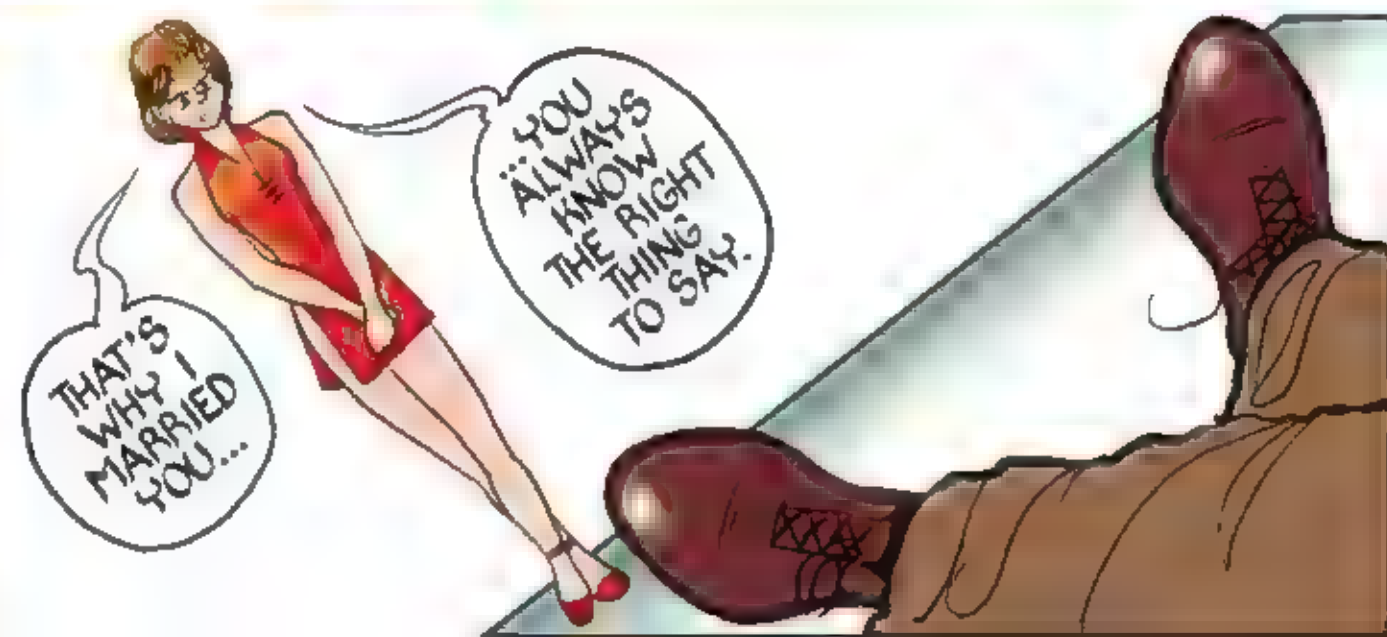
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BY ANY CHANCE, IS THAT A CALENDAR WATCH YOU'RE WEARING?

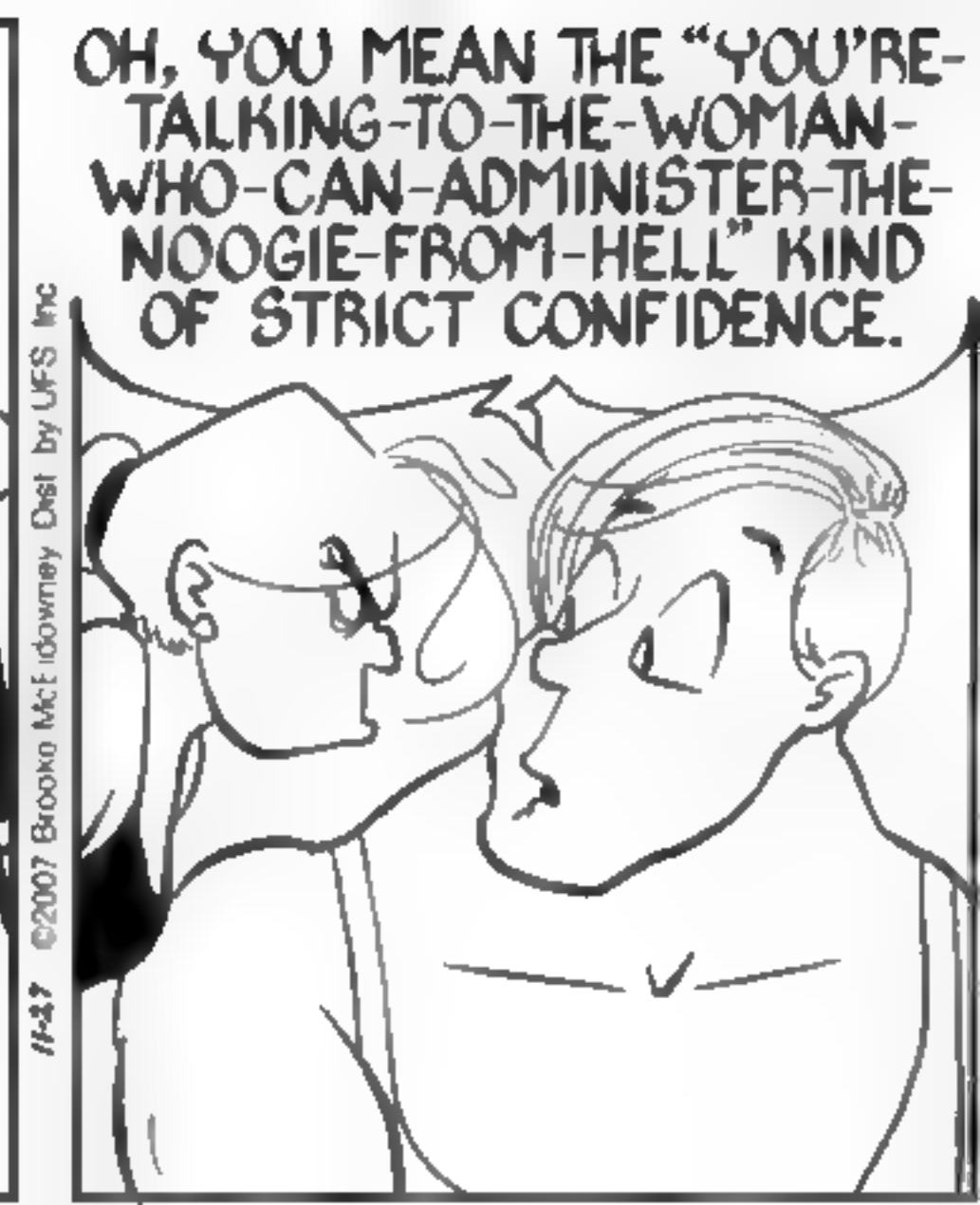




11-45 2007 Brooke McE downey Dist by ©FS Inc







DIANE HASN'T YET TOLD
FRANCIS THAT SHE MIGHT
BE PREGNANT.
SHE WONDER'S
IF SHE'S
DOING
THE
RIGHT
THING.



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DOING RIGHT IS
ALWAYS A MATTER OF
CONSCIENCE.



DOING WRONG
NECESSITATES
ELECTIONS.



YOU REALLY
KNOW HOW
TO RUIN AN
ARABESQUE.

Breaker



NOW THAT YOU ARE
LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD,
WHAT WILL BE YOUR FIRST
ACT?



WELL, FORTUNATELY THE
FREE WORLD IS EXTREMELY
SMALL AND SHRINKING...
...AND BECAUSE IT IS FREE,
IT RESISTS ANY ACTUAL
ATTEMPTS AT
LEADERSHIP.



Brooke

11-30 / Brooke McElowney Dist. by UFS, Inc.



I BELIEVE I SHALL CATCH
UP ON MY BLUEBERRY
SALES.

WE'RE
IN SAFE
HANDS.

AS LEADER OF THE FREE
WORLD, DON'T YOU BELIEVE
FREEDOM IS BESTOWED ON
A PEOPLE ONLY
BY STRONG
GOVERNMENT?



YOU CANNOT GIVE PEOPLE
WHAT THEY ALREADY
POSSESS. A GOVERNMENT'S
PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION LIES
IN CURTAILING AND
ELIMINATING THE NATURAL
FREEDOMS OF ITS
CITIZENS, AND THEN
FLIMFLAMMING THEM INTO
PAYING FOR THE
SERVICE.

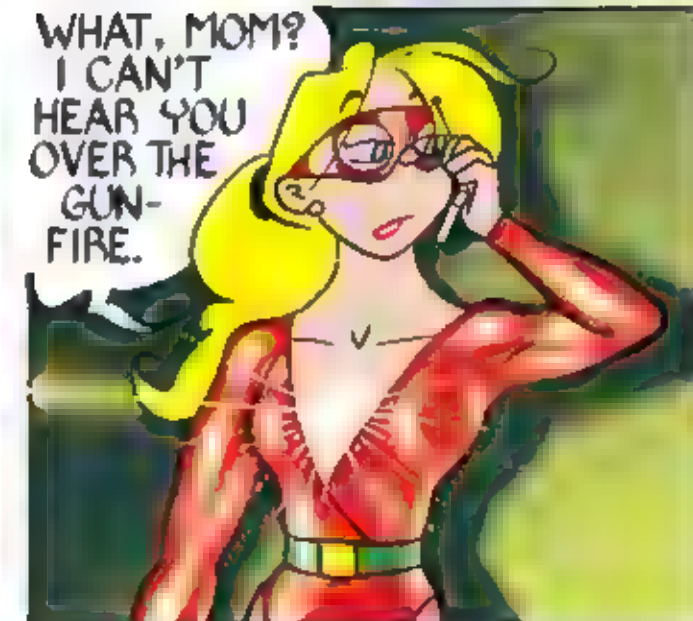


I AVOID GOVERNANCE
BECAUSE IT IS
ANTONYMOUS
TO FREEDOM.

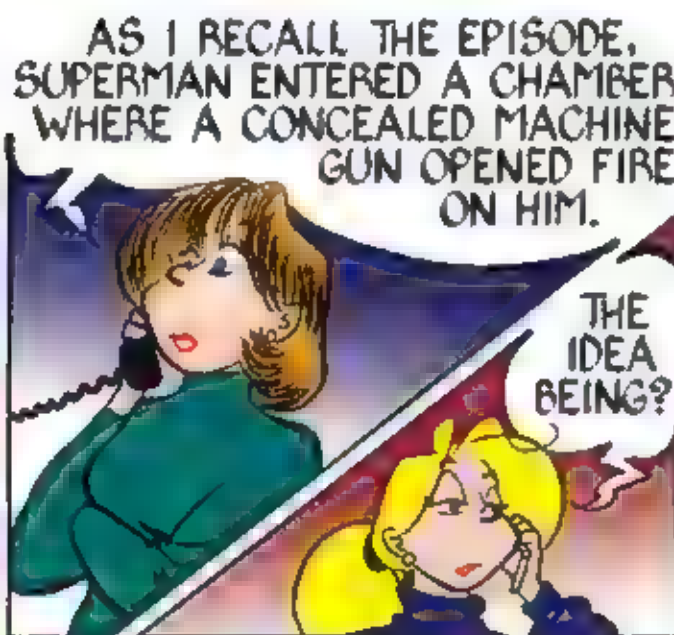


WHAT
DO YOU
DO, THEN?

I ANSWER
THE PHONES.

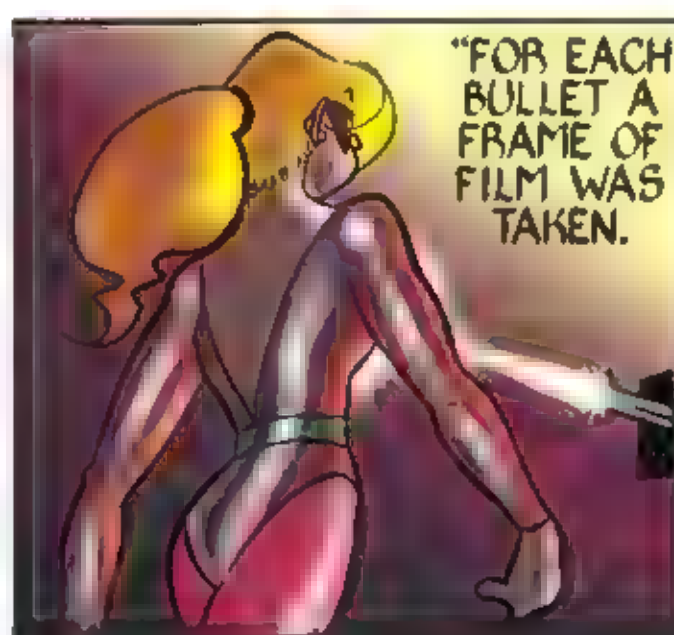


WHAT, MOM?
I CAN'T
HEAR YOU
OVER THE
GUN-
FIRE.

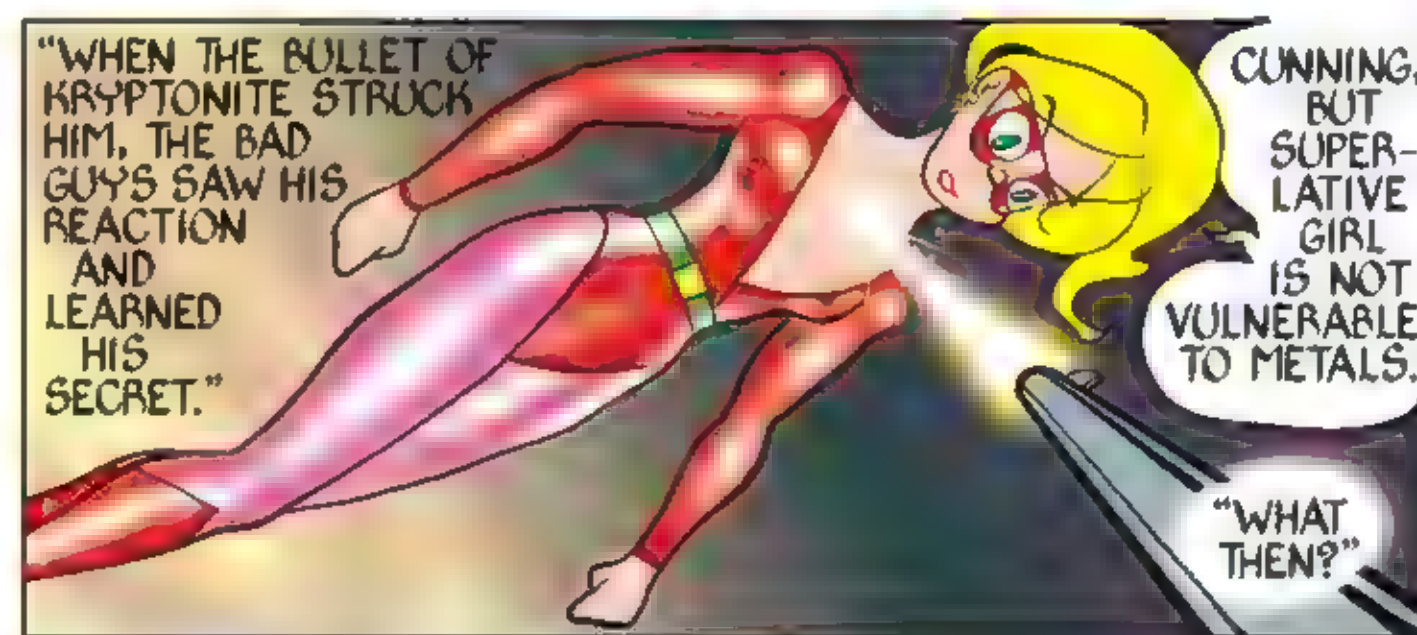


AS I RECALL THE EPISODE,
SUPERMAN ENTERED A CHAMBER
WHERE A CONCEALED MACHINE
GUN OPENED FIRE
ON HIM.

THE
IDEA
BEING?



"FOR EACH
BULLET A
FRAME OF
FILM WAS
TAKEN.



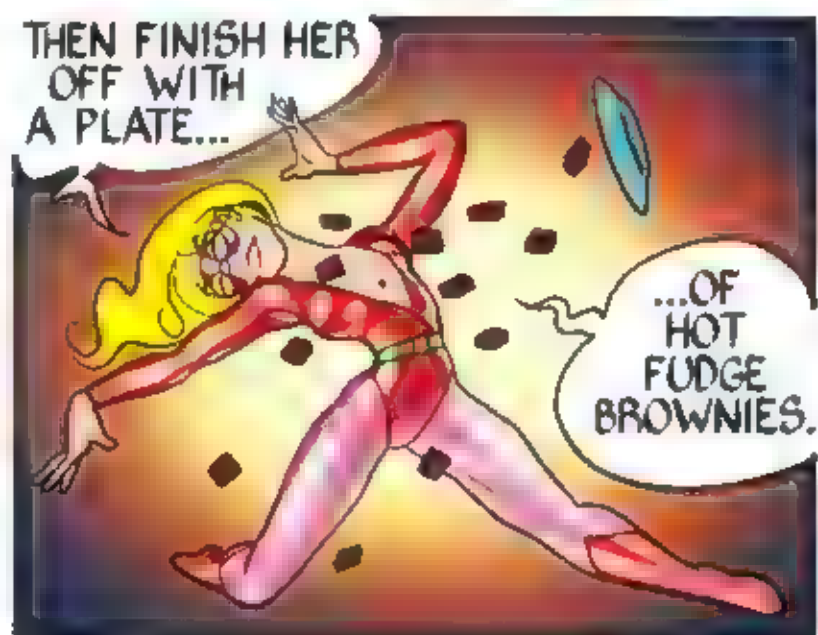
"WHEN THE BULLET OF
KRYPTONITE STRUCK
HIM, THE BAD
GUYS SAW HIS
REACTION
AND
LEARNED
HIS
SECRET."

CUNNING,
BUT
SUPER-
LATIVE
GIRL
IS NOT
VULNERABLE
TO METALS.

"WHAT
THEN?"



THEY'D HAVE
TO PIERCE HER
BODY WITH A
PROJECTILE OF
PURE CHOCOLATE
CHIP.



THEN FINISH HER
OFF WITH
A PLATE...

...OF
HOT
FUDGE
BROWNIES.

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SHE'S
VULNERABLE TO
BROWNIES?

WHO ARE YOU?
AND WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE WITH
MY MOTHER?







ALL I'M ASKING IS,
IF I WERE THINKING
I MIGHT BE PREGNANT,
WOULD YOU WANT
ME TO TELL YOU?



12-6 ©2007 Brooke McEldowney Dist. by UFS, Inc.

ALL RIGHT...IF I WERE
TO BEGIN TO SUSPECT,
AFTER OUR WEDDING, THAT
I MIGHT BE PREGNANT,
WOULD YOU WANT ME
TO TELL YOU?



OKAY...REVISION NUMBER FIVE...IF I WERE TO BEGIN
TO WONDER, AFTER BEING YOUR MONOGAMOUSLY-
CHASTE SWEETHEART, THEN, AS AFFECTION GREW
INTO LOVE, YOUR FIANCEE AND, IN TIME, YOUR WIFE,
MARRIED IN A LEGAL CEREMONY BEFORE WITNESSES,
FAMILY AND FRIENDS...AND HAVING TAKEN A THREE-
WEEK HONEYMOON - IF I WERE,

AFTER ALL THAT, TO BEGIN
TO FANCY THAT I MIGHT BE
PREGNANT, WOULD YOU
WANT ME TO TELL
YOU, THE ONLY MAN
WHOSE CHILDREN
I WILL EVER
BEAR?





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WHEN I ASKED
HOW DIANE COULD
HAVE BECOME
PREGNANT ON
HER HONEYMOON,
ALL I MEANT IS
THAT THESE ARE
MODERN TIMES...
...PEOPLE CAN
SELF-REGULATE.
...SO WHAT
HAPPENED?

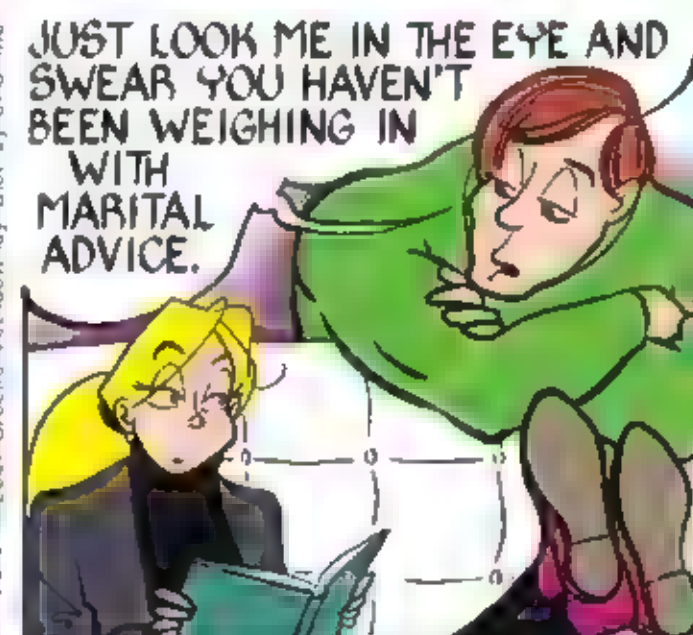
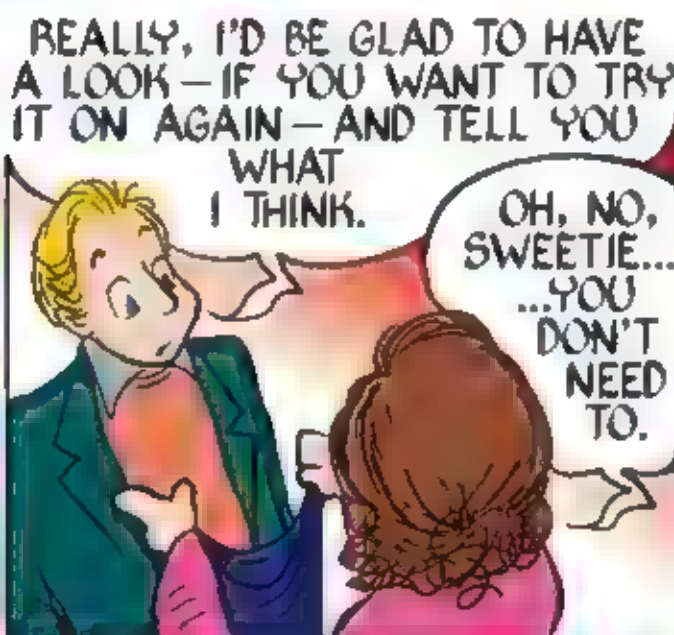
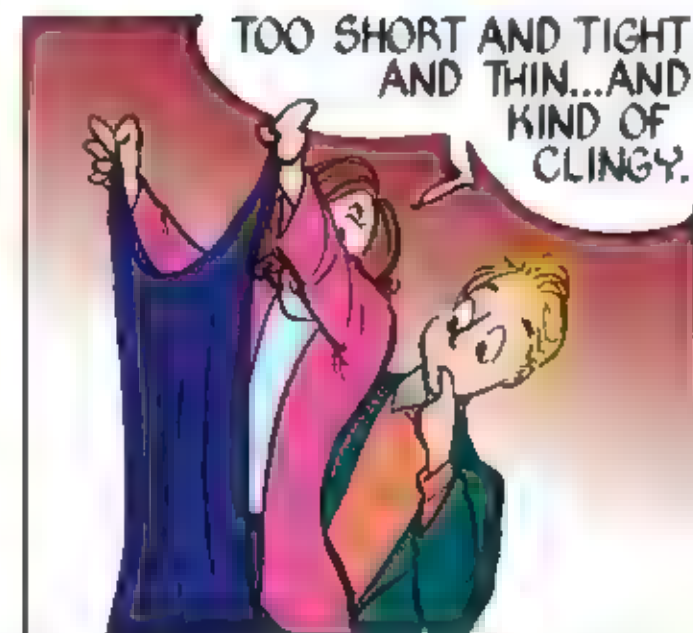
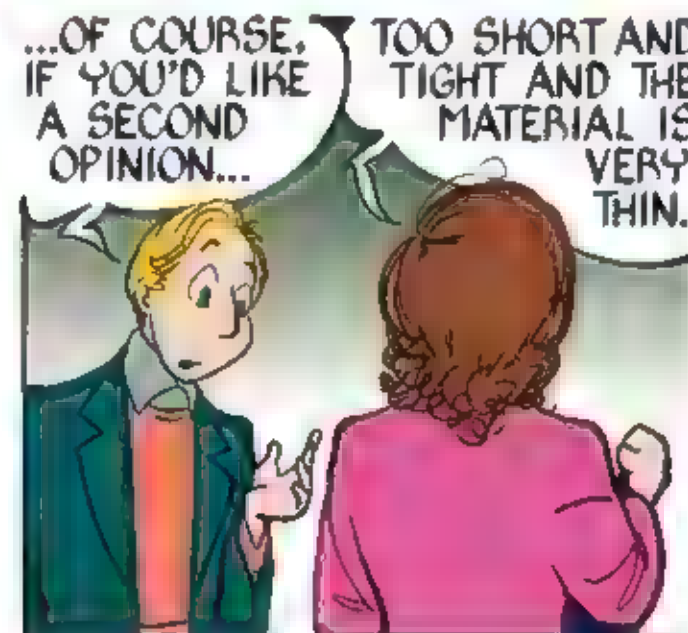
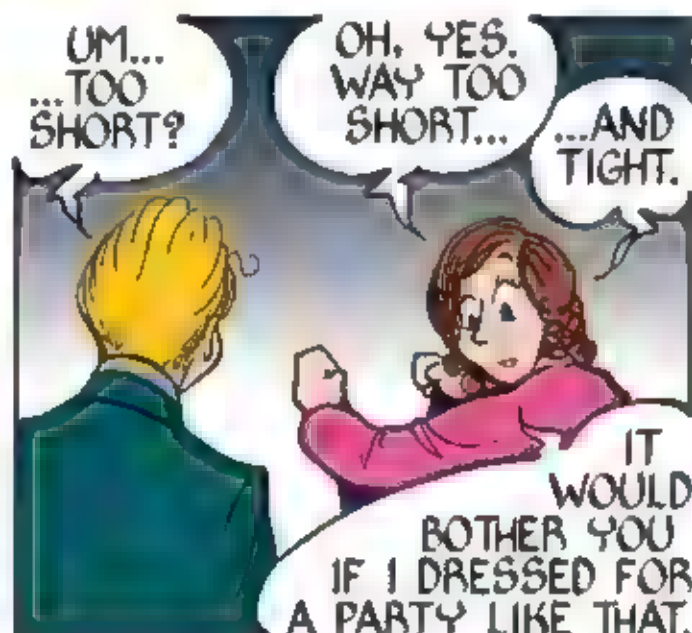
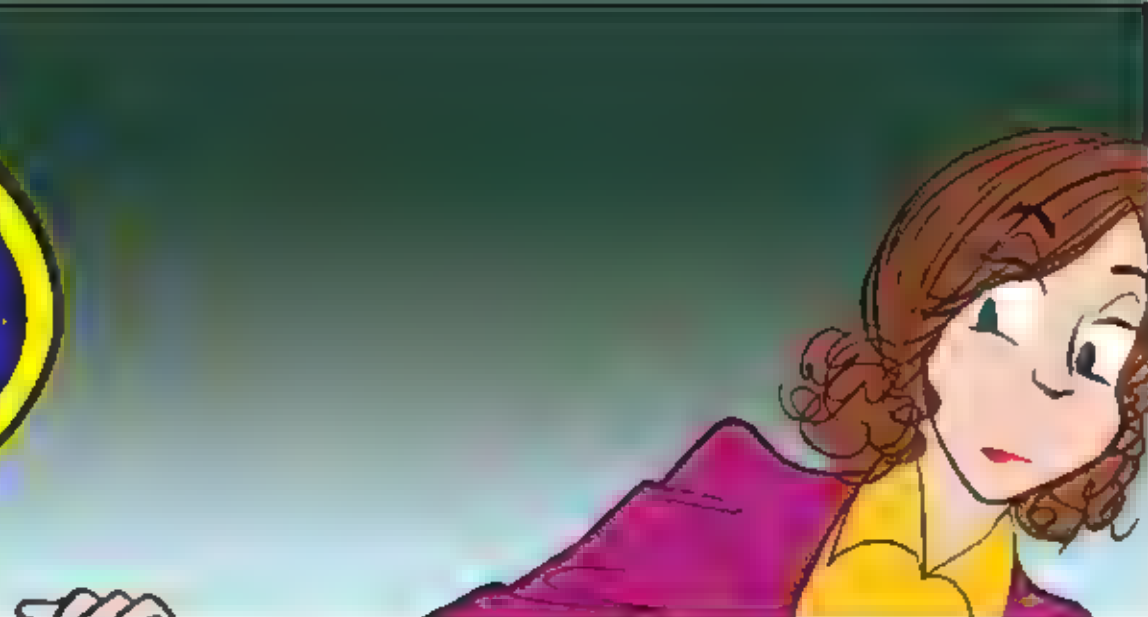


DOES EVERY EXPLANATION
WITH YOU HAVE
TO INVOLVE HOT
BREATH ON THE
NECK?

EVERY
EXPLANATION
WORTH
GIVING.



9 CHICKWEED LANE



BRINGING
ME TO MY
KNEES BY
BREATHING
ON MY NECK
IS NOT A WAY
TO WIN AN
ARGUMENT.



YOU'RE
RIGHT.

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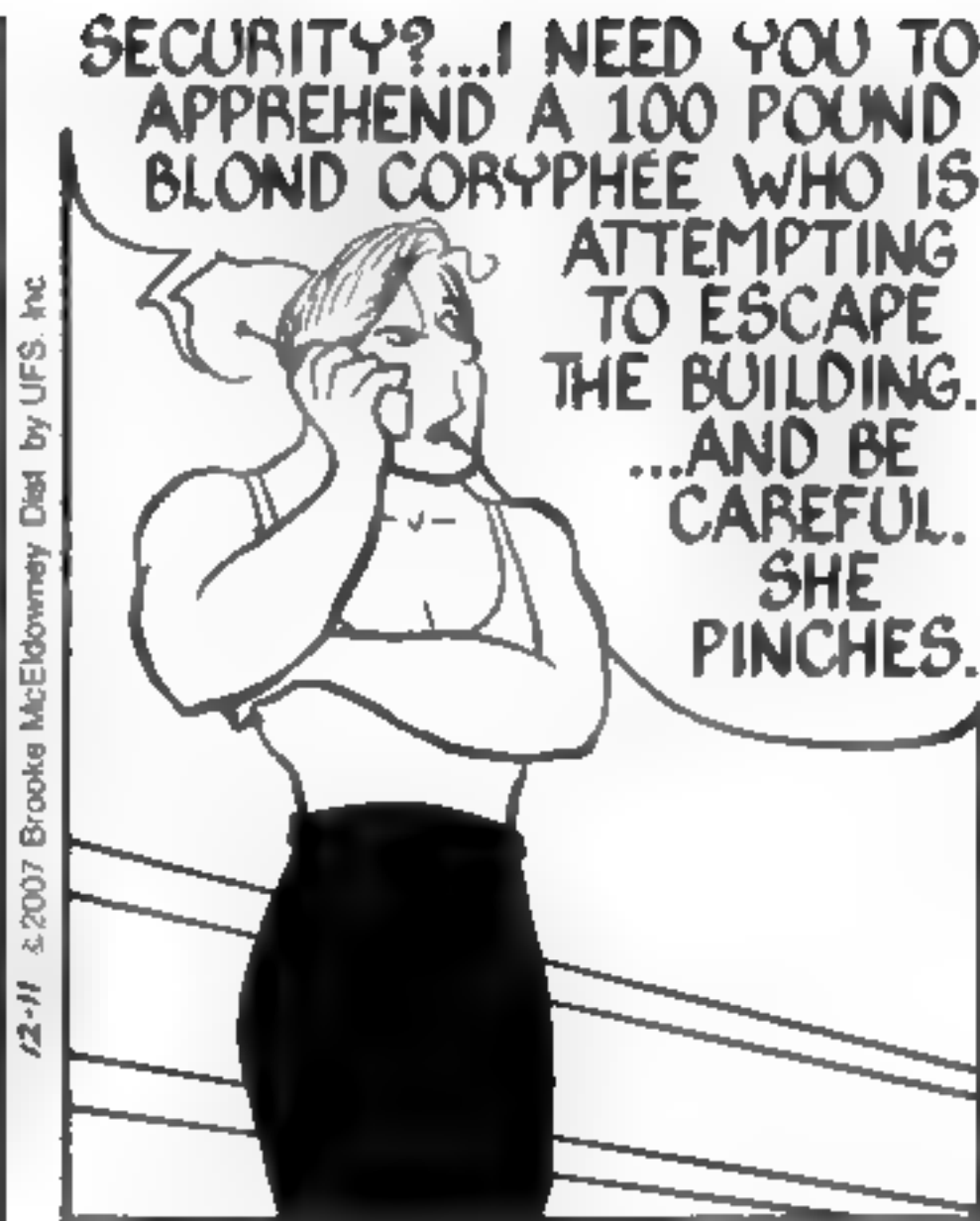
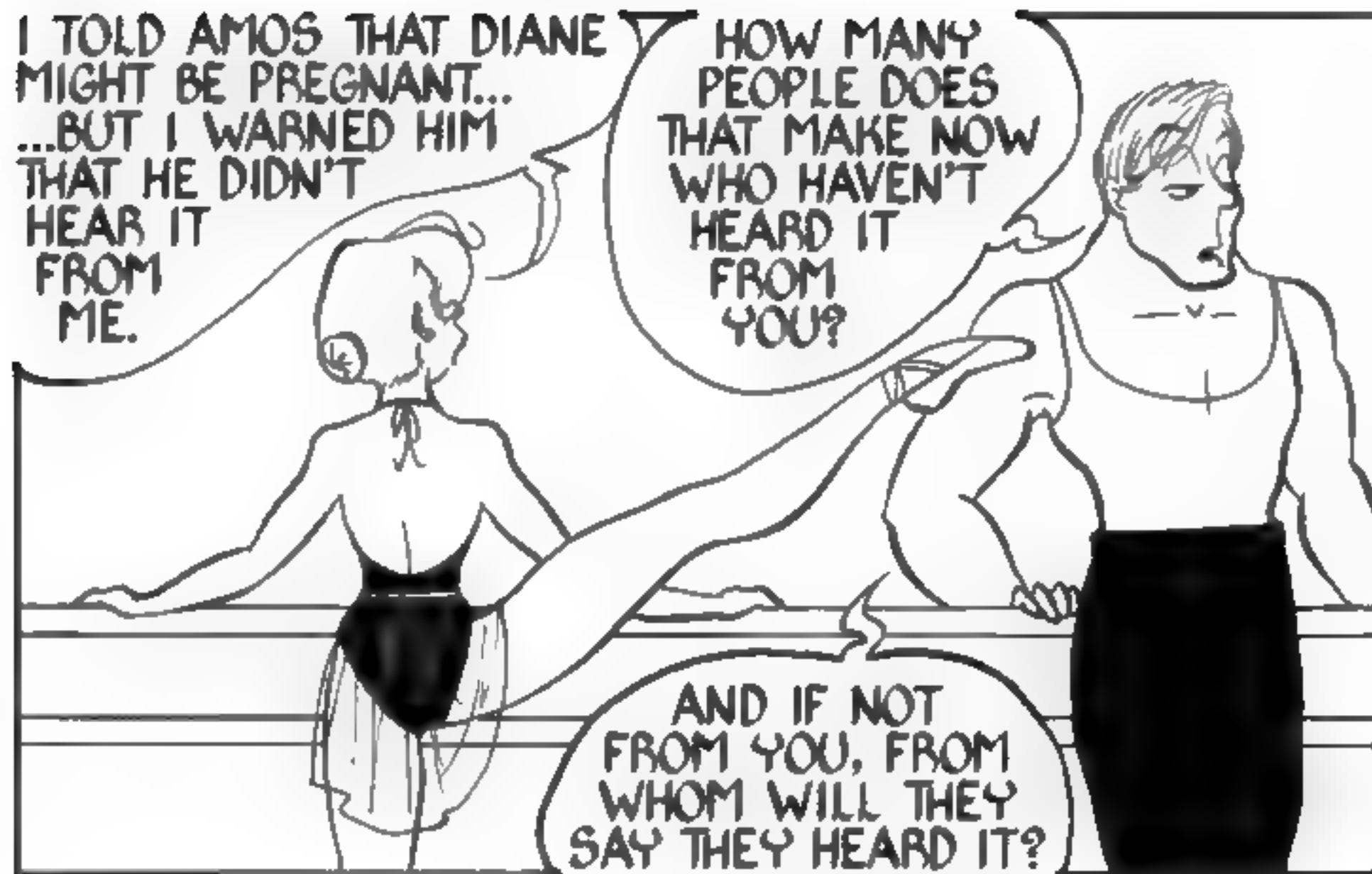
DEBATING
WITH EDDA
AGAIN?

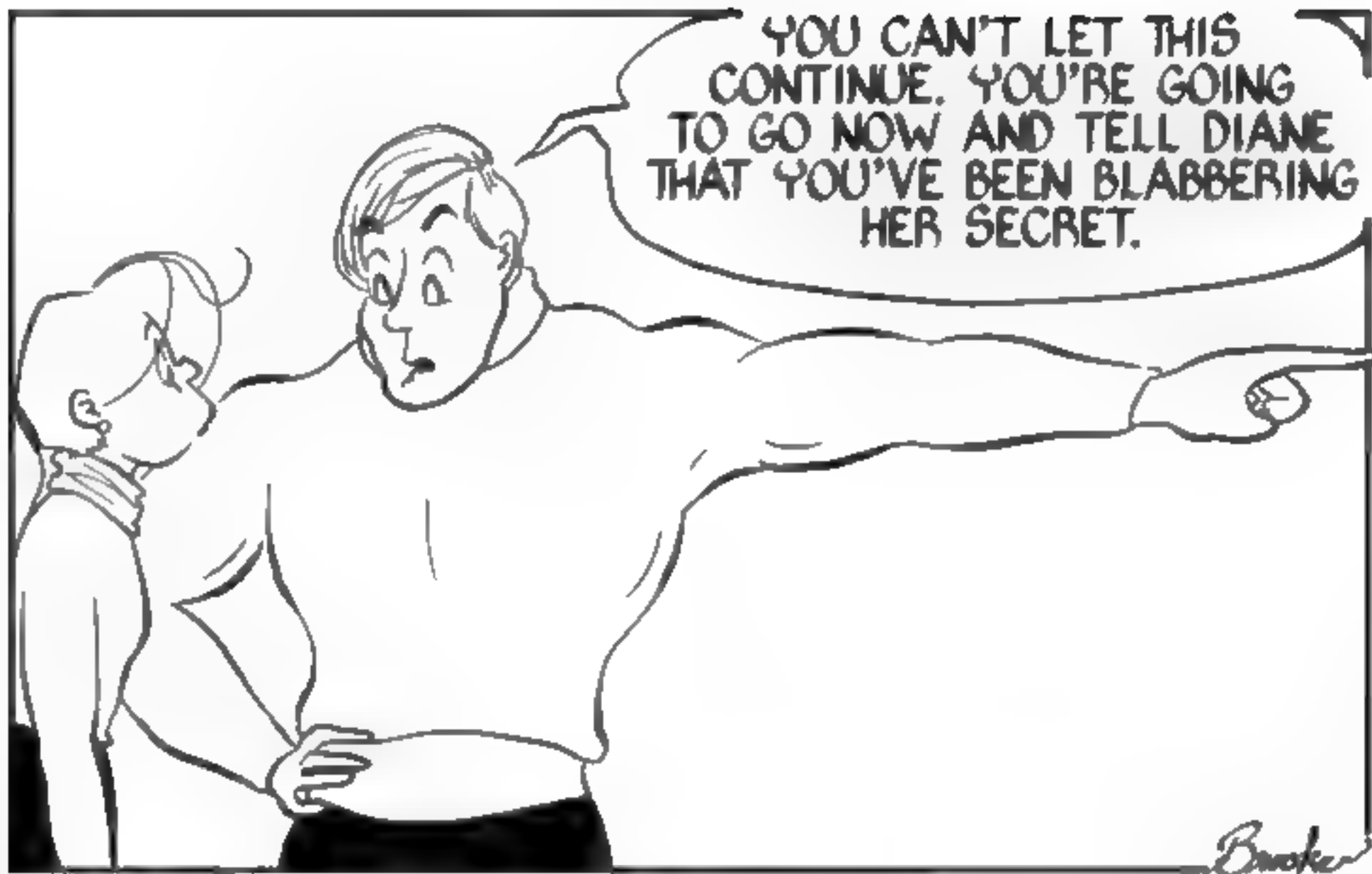


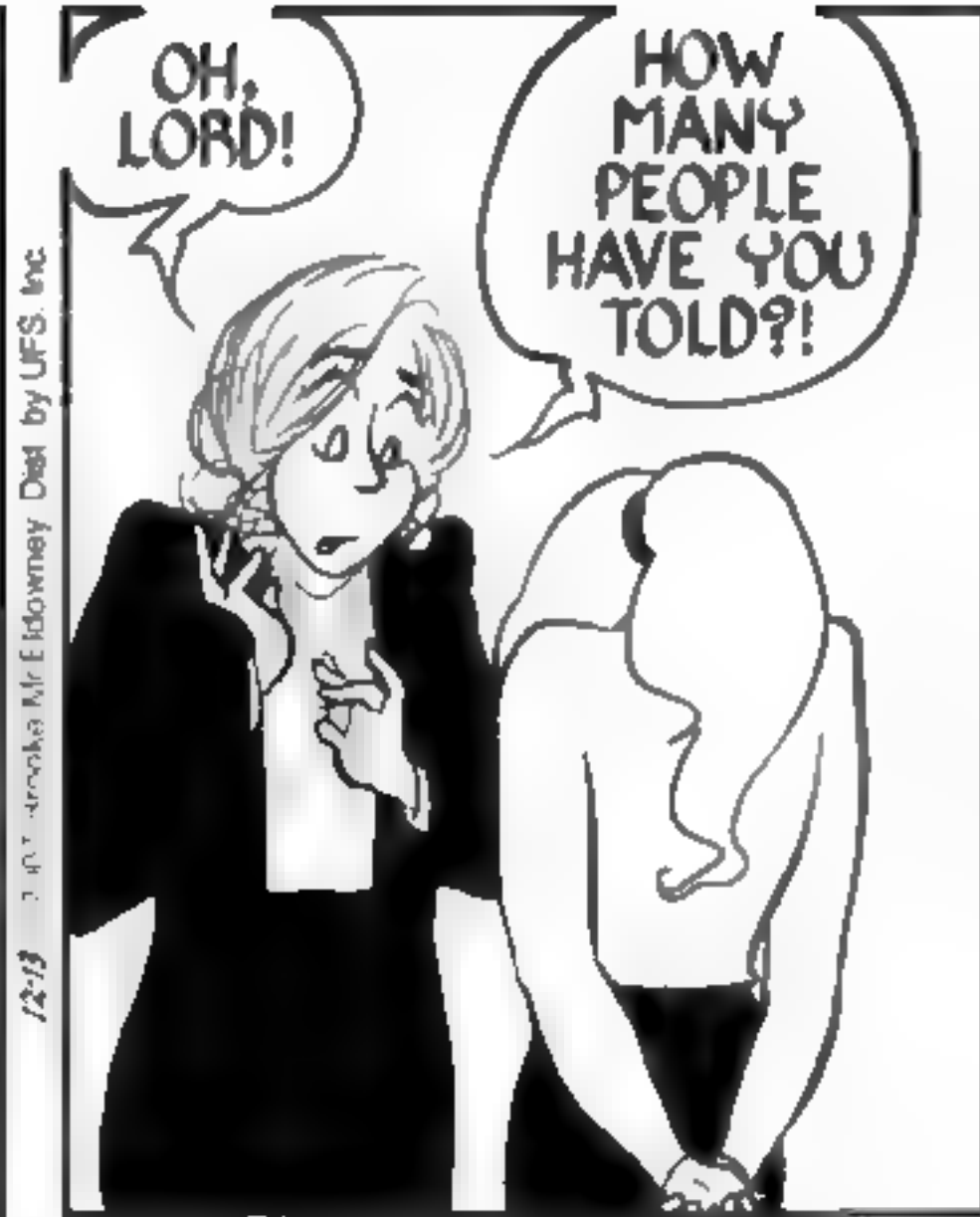
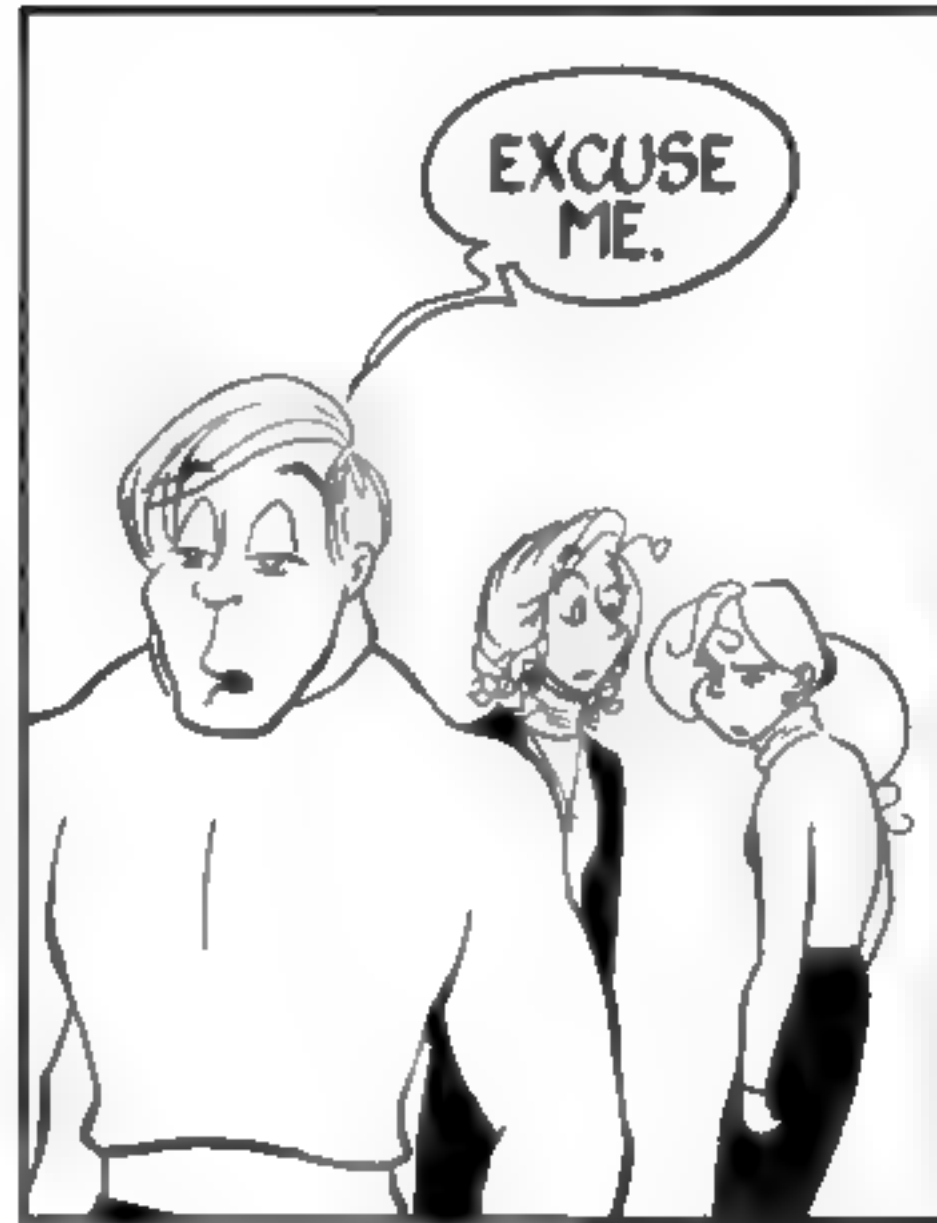
COULD YOU
BRING ME A PILLOW
AND A LIGHT BLANKET
WHILE I FORMULATE
MY REBUTTAL?

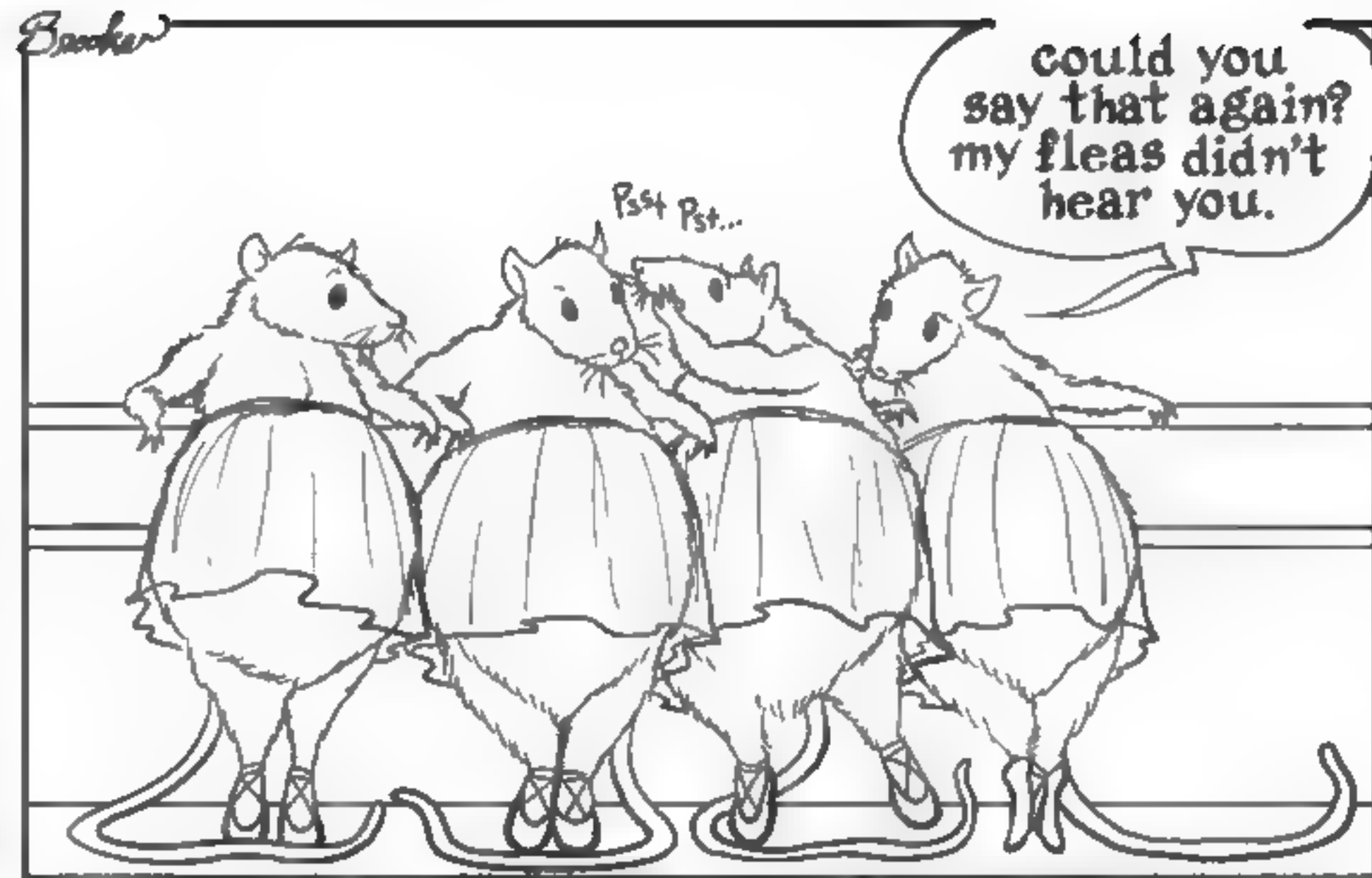


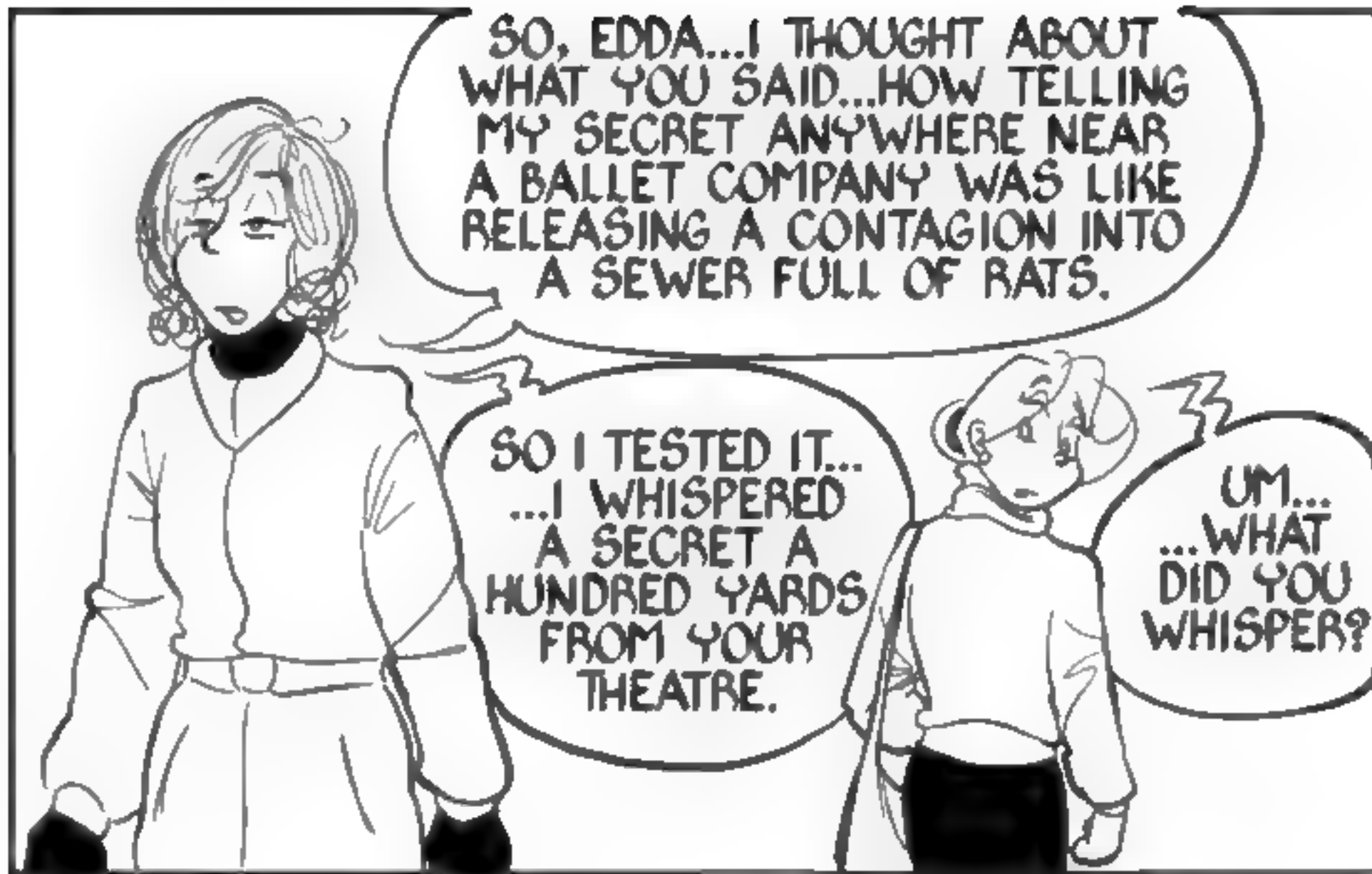
Brooke

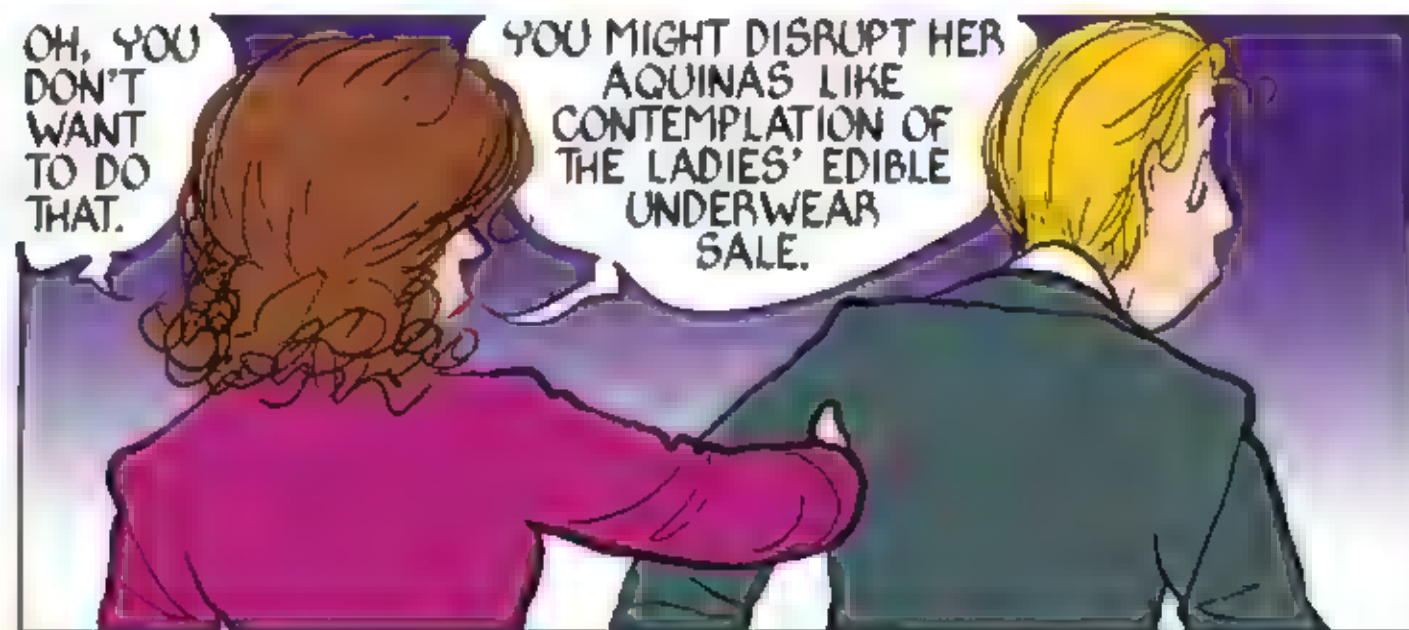
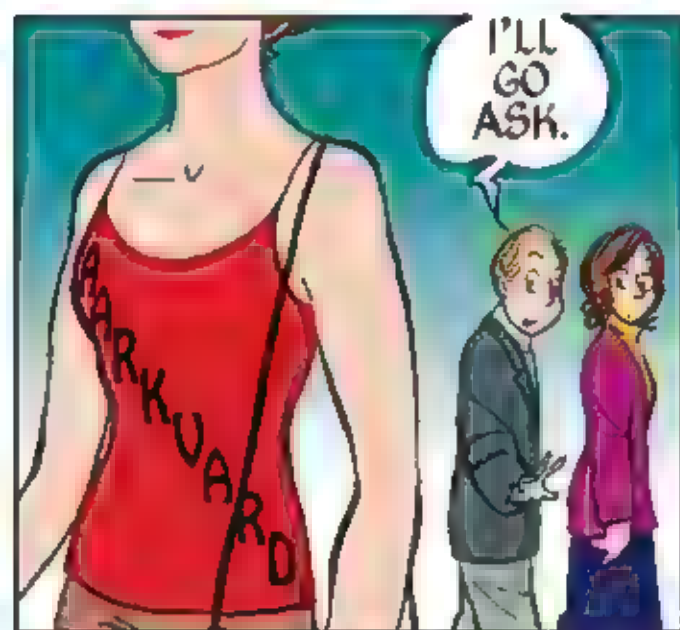
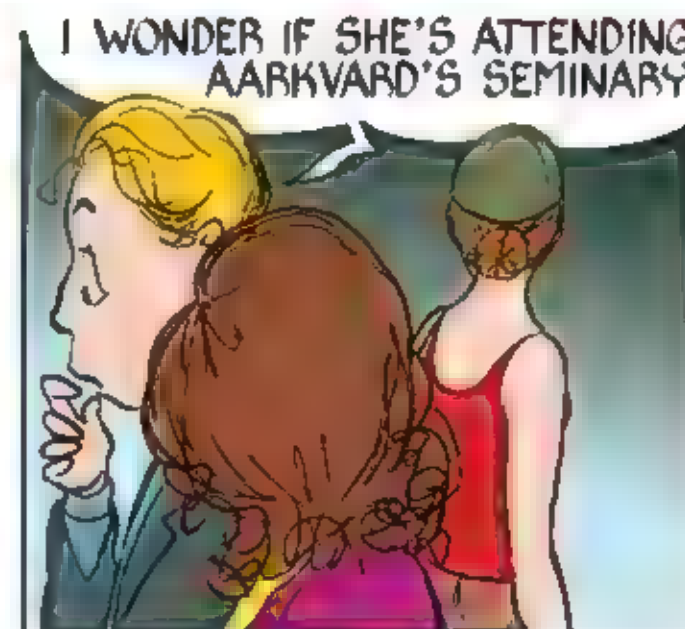
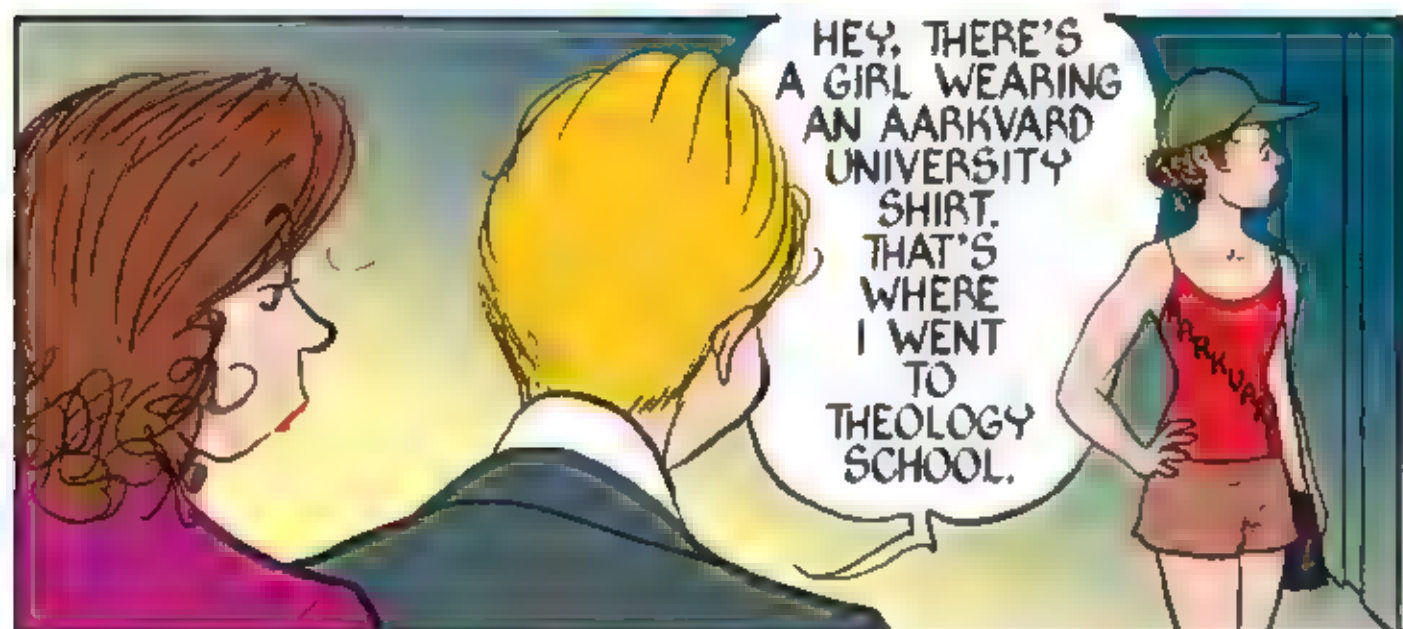
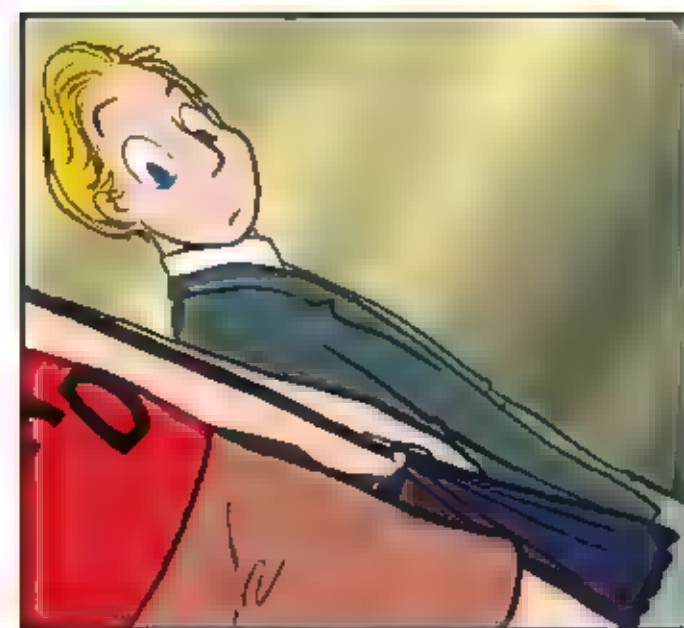


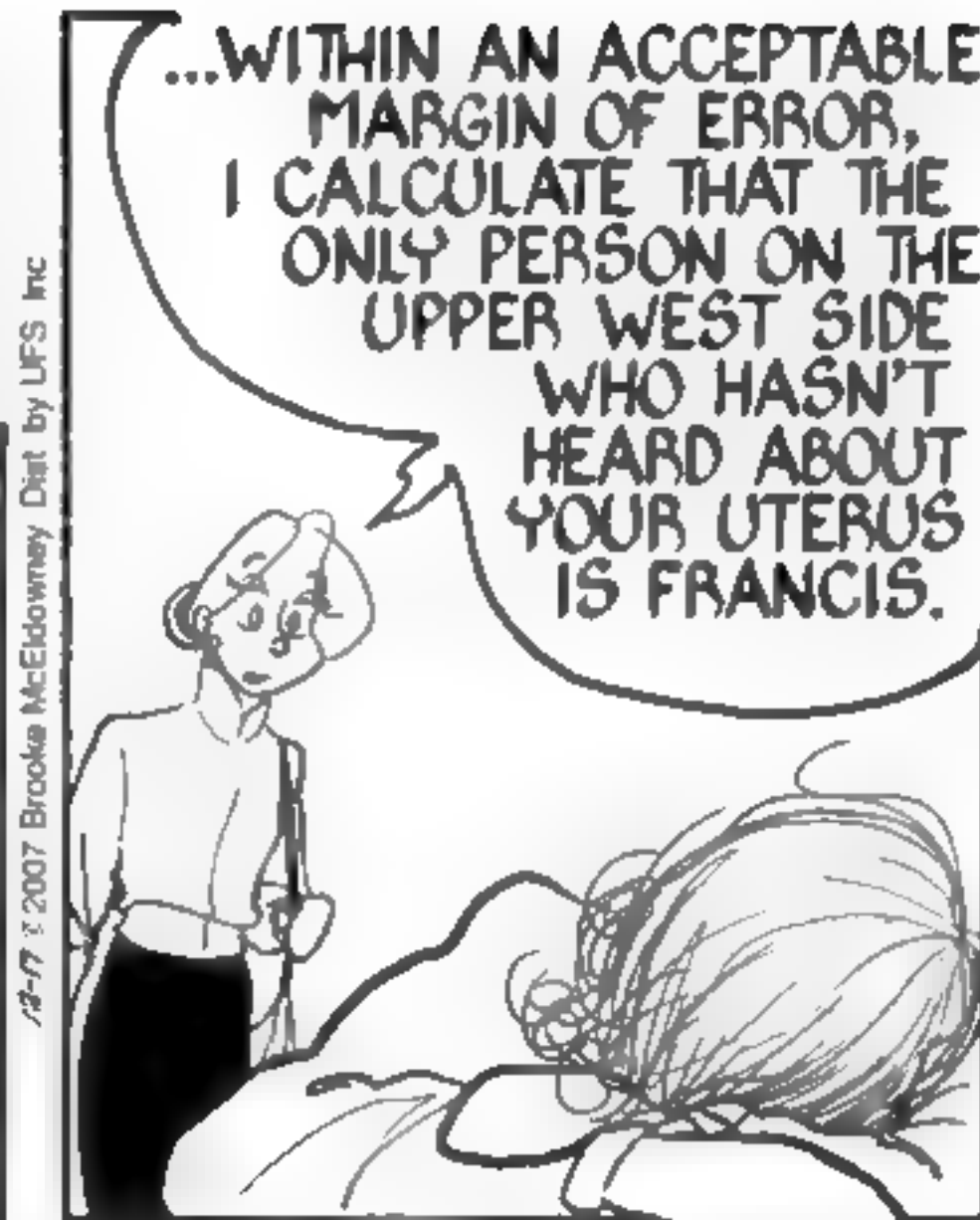
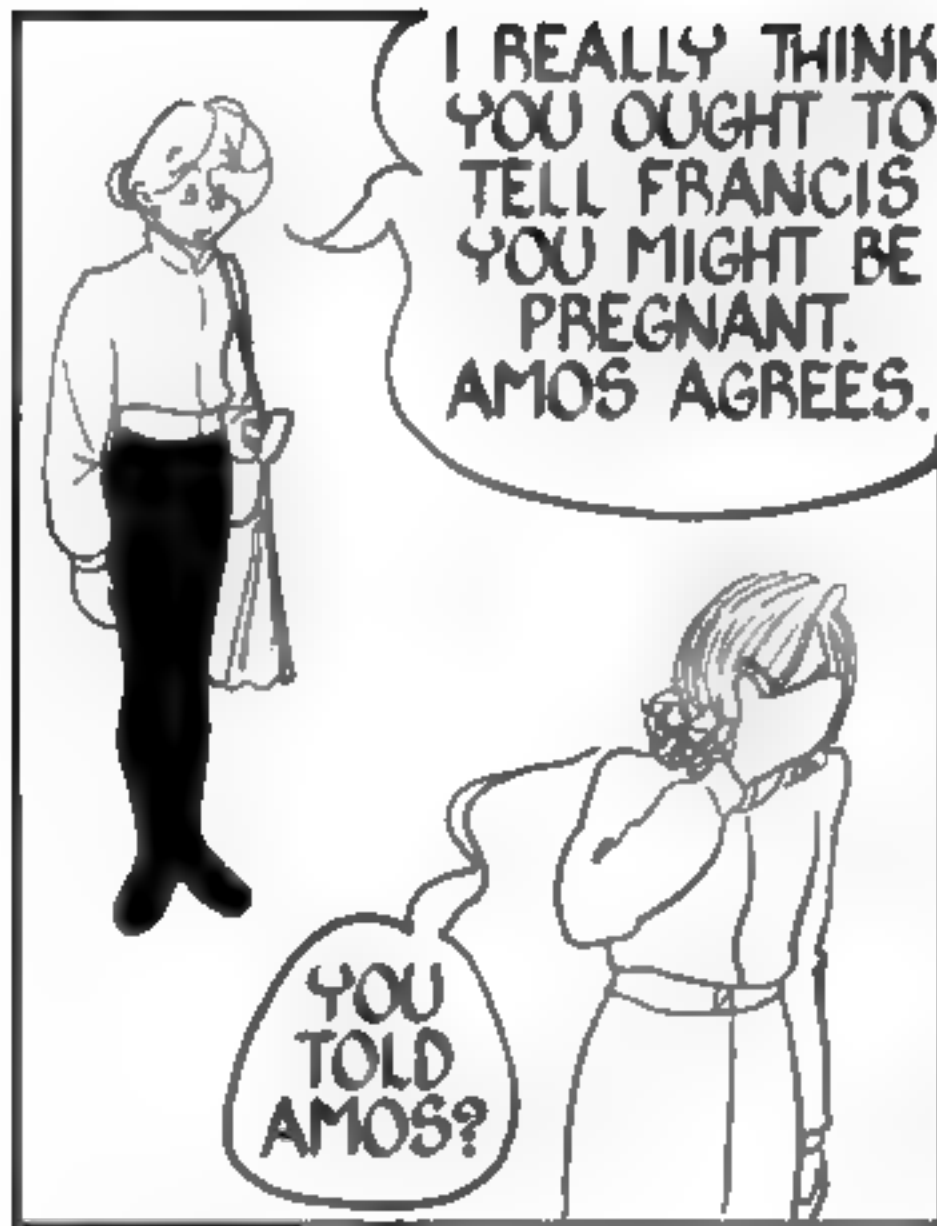


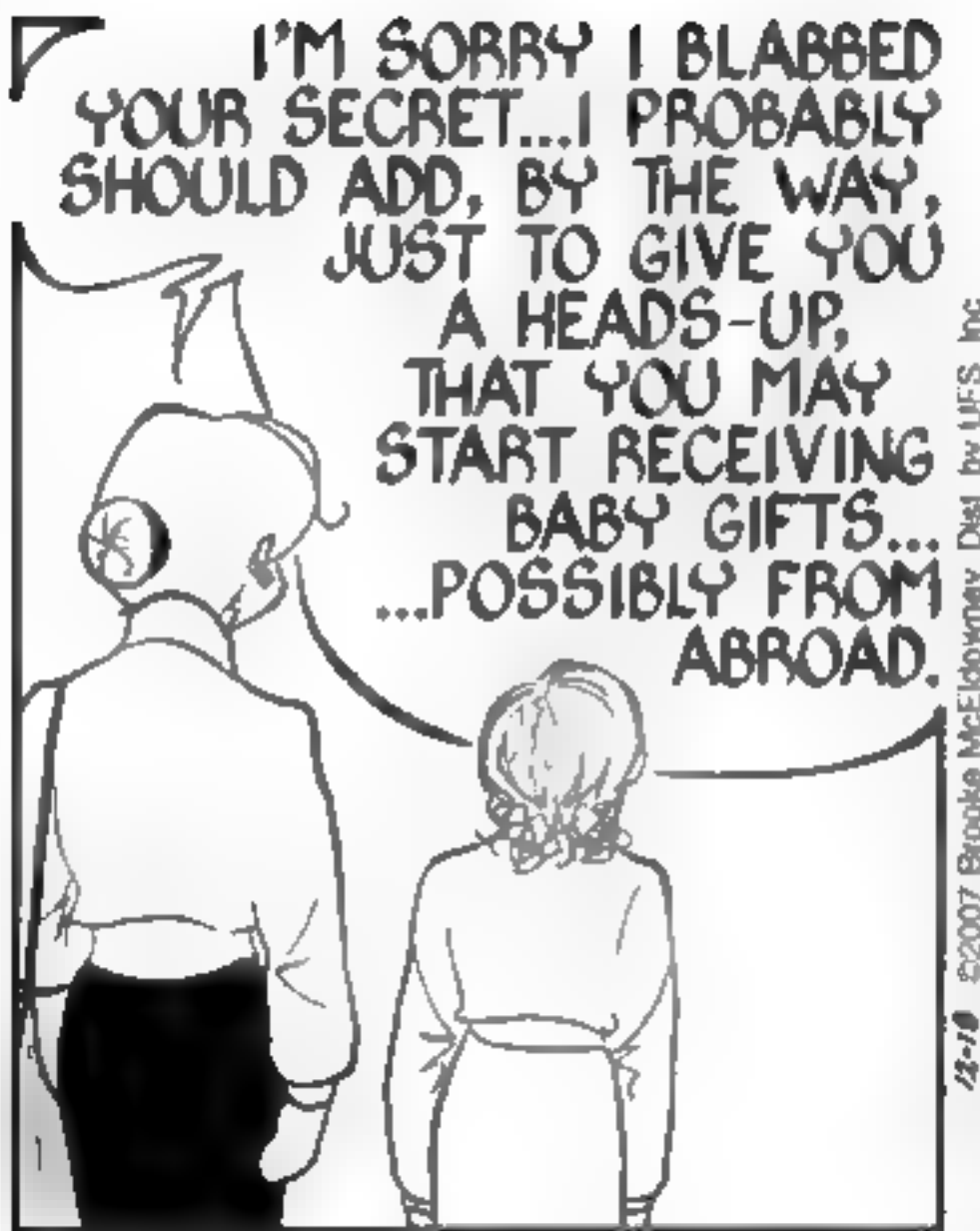




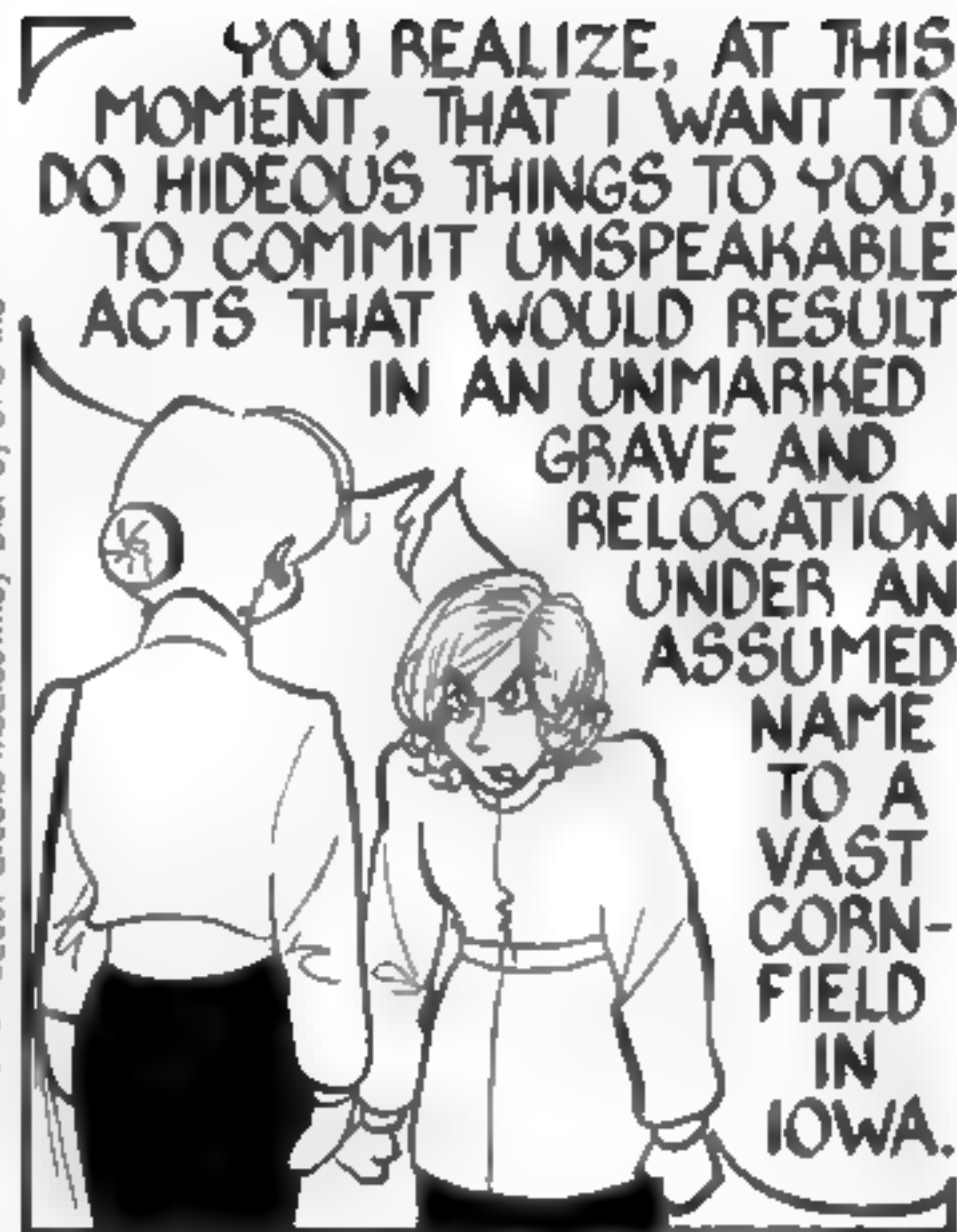








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I REALLY
DON'T
KNOW
WHAT
TO TELL
FRANCIS.

BEFORE YOU
DO, DON'T YOU
THINK IT WOULD
MAKE SENSE
TO TAKE A
PREGNANCY
TEST?



I DON'T
WANT
TO.

BUT
WHAT'S
THE WORST
THING YOU
COULD FIND
OUT?



THAT
I'M
GOING
TO HAVE
A BABY...

IS
THAT
SO
BAD?



...OR
THAT
I'M
NOT.

OH...
...SWEETIE.



HERE I AM, NEWLY WED, JUST
GETTING TO KNOW FRANCIS
AS A PARTNER, A LOVE,
A HUSBAND...
...A FRIEND.
NOW I THINK
I MAY BE
PREGNANT.

FATHER DURLY?...
...IS THAT YOU?!
IT'S ME! ARTHUR SHEA.

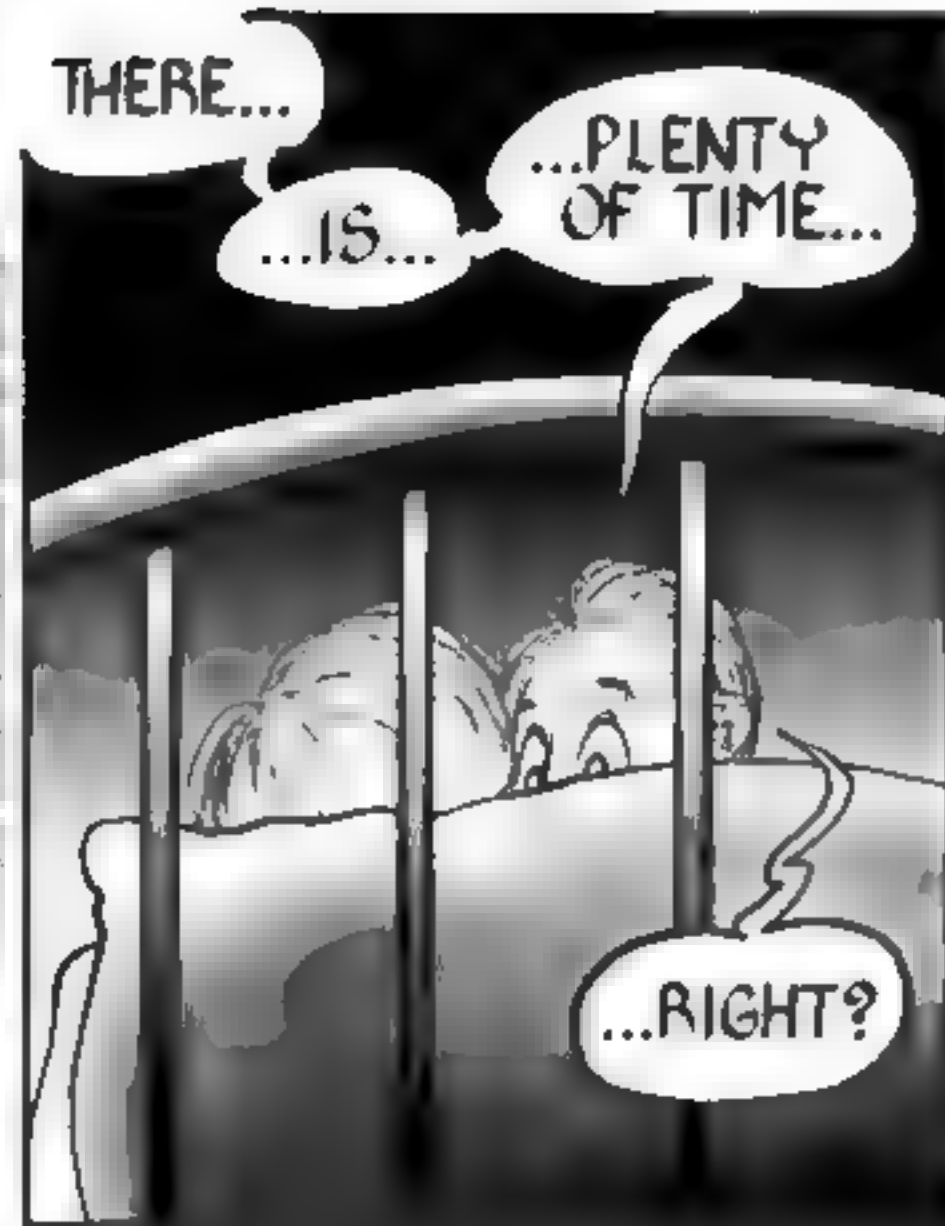
ARTHUR!?

WHY AREN'T YOU
WEARING YOUR PRIEST
DUDS, FATHER?

THE FACT IS,
I'M NO LONGER
A FATHER.

THAT'S
WHAT YOU
THINK.

Brooke



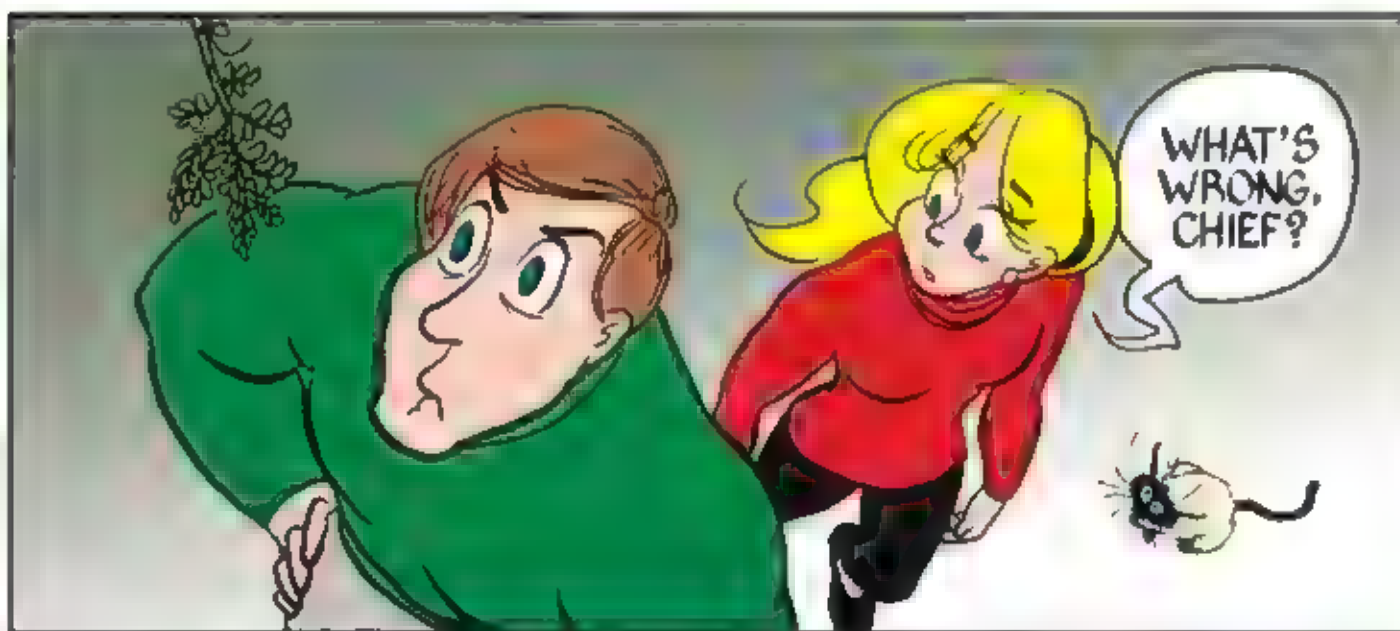
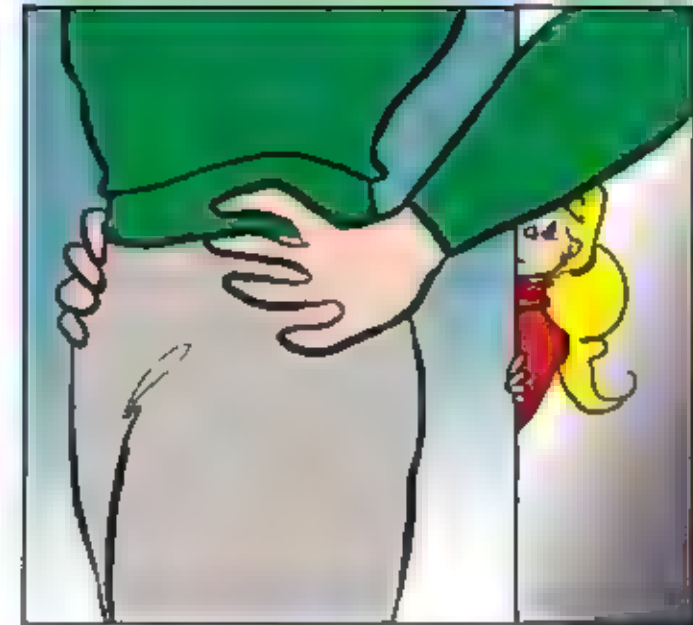
I TALKED
TO SISTER
STEVEN
ABOUT
HAVING
CHILDREN...

...BUT
I DIDN'T
LET ON
THAT I
THINK
I'M
PREGNANT.

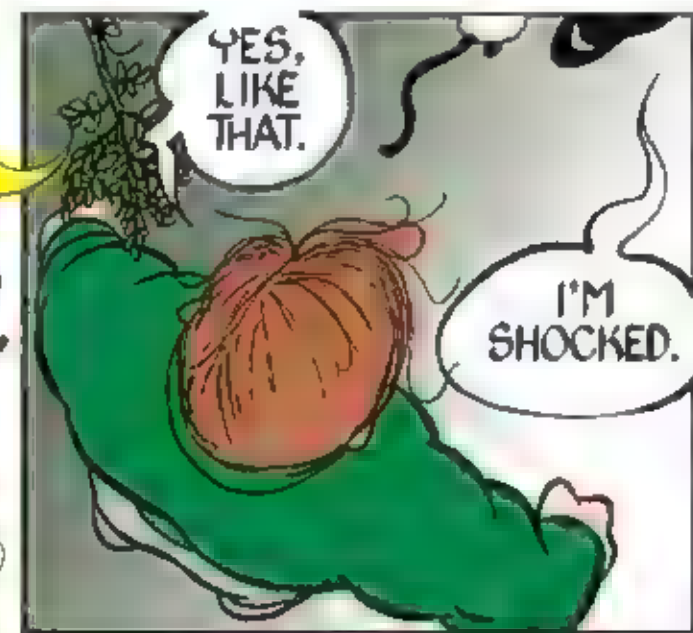
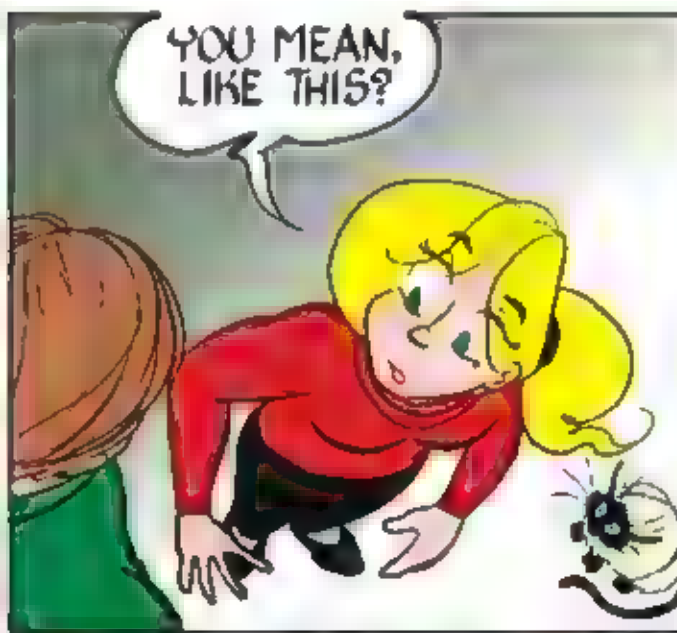
WHAT
DID
SHE
SAY?

SHE SPOKE A LOT ABOUT
BEING FRUITFUL AND FERTILE
AND REPLENISHING...I THINK
SHE USED THE WORD
"BOUNTEOUS" IN THERE
SOMEWHERE.

BY THE TIME
WE WERE DONE,
I FELT LESS LIKE
A MOM AND MORE
LIKE A GRAIN
ELEVATOR.



JANICE POPPED BY FOR A MOMENT... AND WHEN SHE SAW MY MISTLETOE, SHE SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO WRAP HERSELF AROUND ME AND KISS ME LIKE A SAILOR ON V-J DAY.







WORD HAS JUST REACHED
MONTY THAT YOU MAY
HAVE ADDED ANOTHER SOUL
TO YOUR NUMBERS
ON EARTH...OR
POSSIBLY
NOT.



Brooke

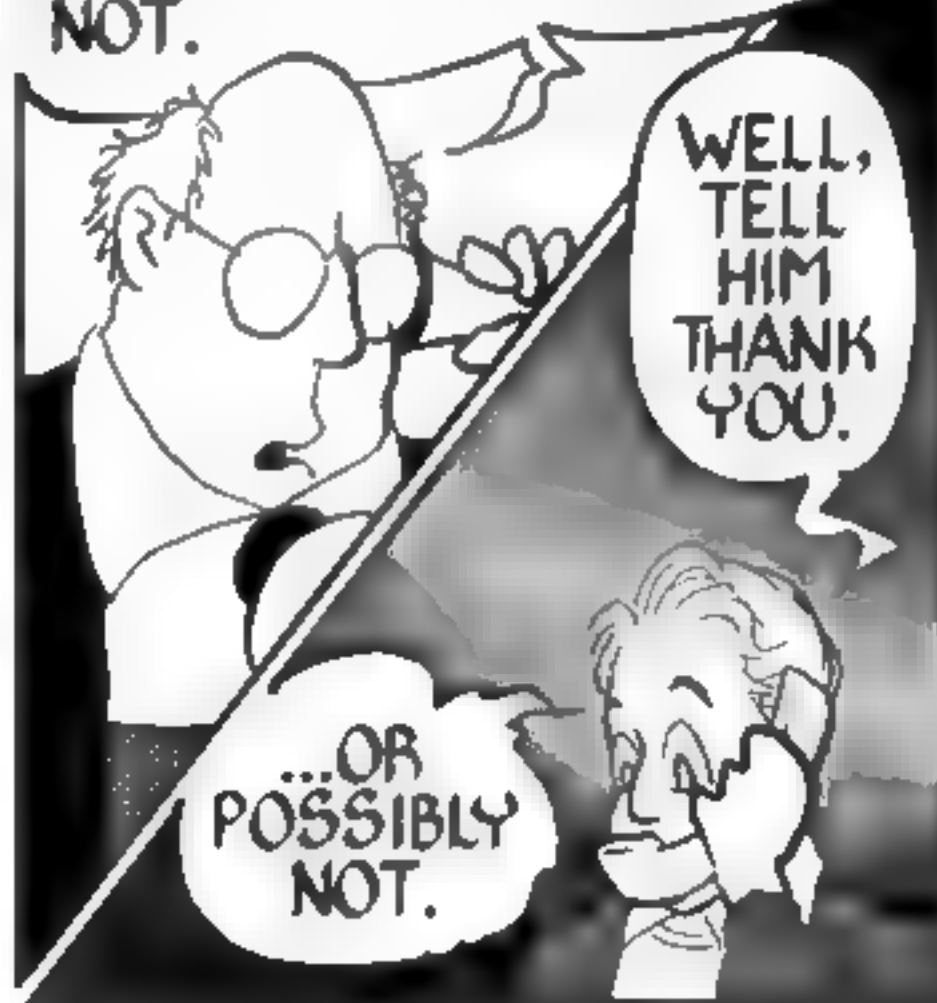
UM...
...YES...
...OR
POSSIBLY
NOT.



HE JUST WANTS TO OFFER
HIS HEARTFELT CONGRATU-
LATIONS...OR POSSIBLY
NOT.

WELL,
TELL
HIM
THANK
YOU.

...OR
POSSIBLY
NOT.



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WHAT
WAS
THAT?

NOTHING...
...OR
POSSIBLY
NOT.



FRANCIS...NOW THAT WORD
IS OUT THAT DIANE
MAY BE
PREGNANT,
WE JUST
WANT
TO
GIVE
YOU
OUR
BEST
WISHES.

THAT'S RIGHT!
CONGRATS, GUY!

WELL...
...UM...
THANK
YOU.

...DID YOU
JUST...
...PUNCH HIM
ON THE
SHOULDER?

I...I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
CAME OVER
ME.

I DON'T SEE WHY YOUR
NOSE IS SO OUT OF JOINT.
DIANE AND I ARE
MARRIED,
AFTER
ALL.



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I TAKE PERSONAL
OFFENSE WHEN
SOMEONE GETS
ONE OF MY NUNS
PREGNANT!



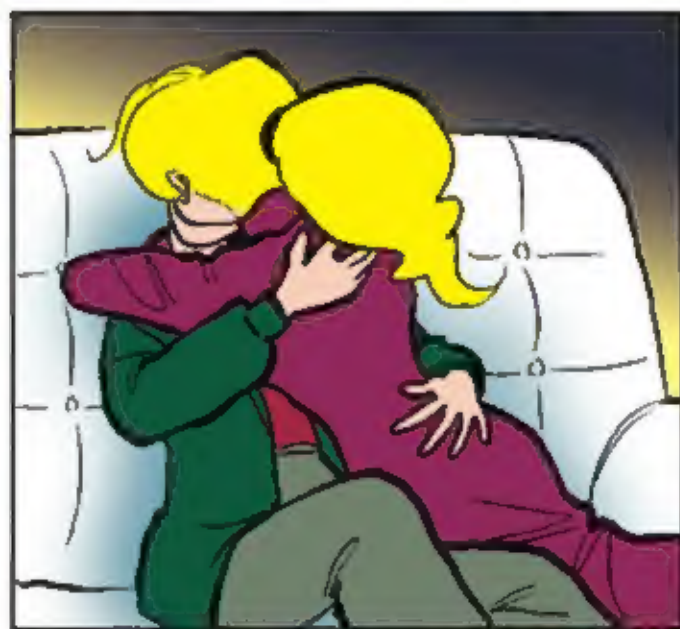
Barke

OKAY, LET
ME PUT THAT
ANOTHER WAY.

AND
A LITTLE
MORE
SOFTLY.



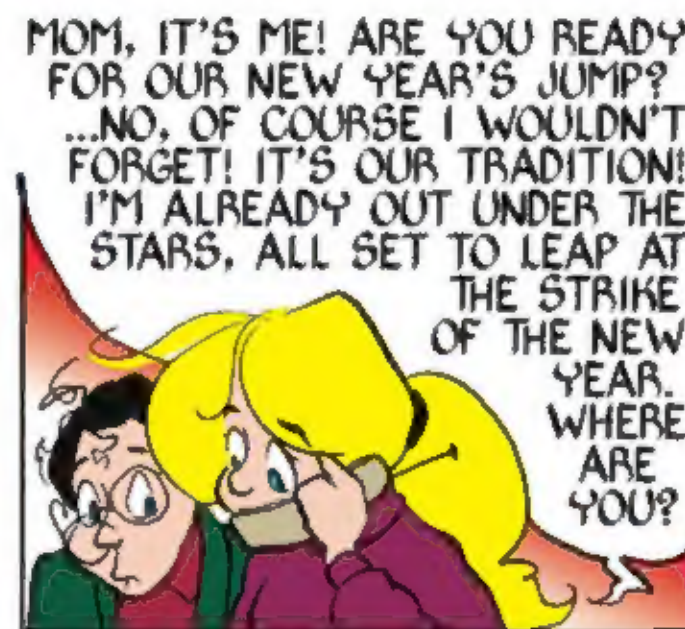
9 CHICKWEED LANE



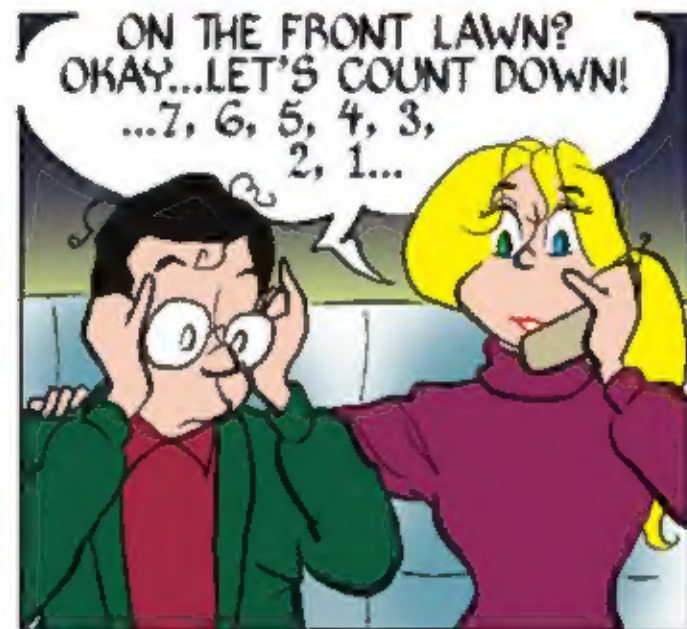
12-30



OH SHOOT! IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT!...AMOS, GIVE ME YOUR PHONE!



MOM, IT'S ME! ARE YOU READY FOR OUR NEW YEAR'S JUMP? ...NO, OF COURSE I WOULDN'T FORGET! IT'S OUR TRADITION! I'M ALREADY OUT UNDER THE STARS, ALL SET TO LEAP AT THE STRIKE OF THE NEW YEAR. WHERE ARE YOU?



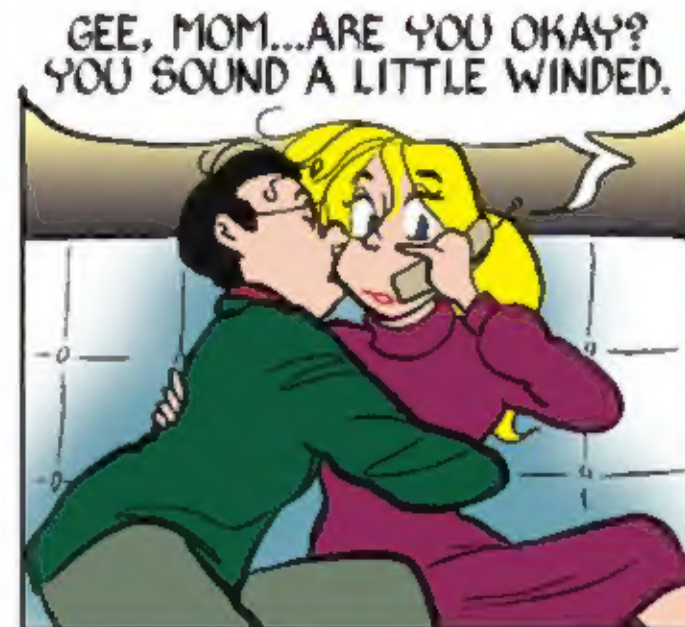
ON THE FRONT LAWN? OKAY...LET'S COUNT DOWN! ...7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...



DID YOU JUMP?...REALLY?! ME TOO! I THINK THAT'S THE HIGHEST I'VE EVER DONE!

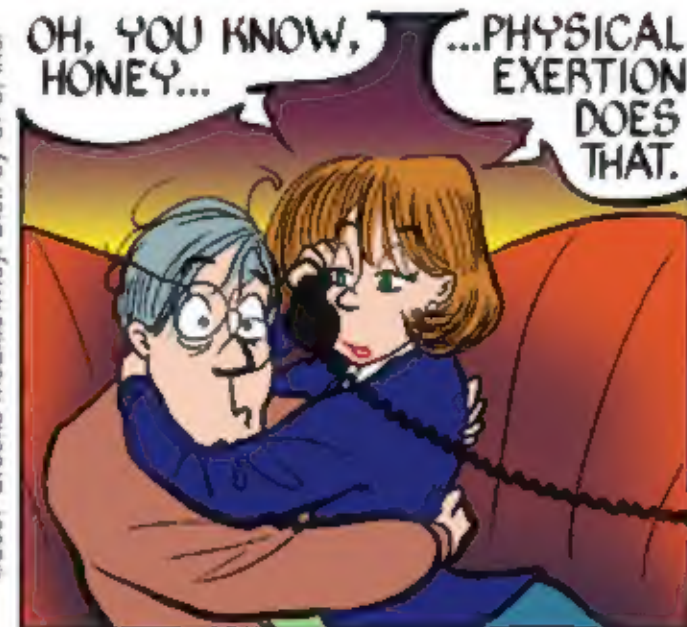
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Brooke



GEE, MOM...ARE YOU OKAY? YOU SOUND A LITTLE WINDED.

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OH, YOU KNOW, HONEY...

...PHYSICAL EXERTION DOES THAT.

WHEN YOU WERE A PRIEST, IT WAS VERY EASY FOR YOU TO LAY DOWN RULES ON RAISING A FAMILY FOR OTHER PEOPLE...BUT NOW YOU'RE NO LONGER FIRING BLANKS...THE GLOVES ARE OFF... YOU'RE PUTTING YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS...



I'M NOT ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE WITH THOSE METAPHORS.

I'M NOT ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE WITHOUT THEM.





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